

Ward(s): Droxford, Soberton & Hambledon; Owslebury & Curdridge;
Colden Common & Twyford; Wonston & Micheldever



Winchester
City Council

DRAFT PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

PROPOSED INDIVIDUAL DECISION BY THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR COMMUNITIES, SAFETY AND PUBLIC HEALTH

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 Corporate Director (Governance), the Chief Executive and the Head of Finance 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.

If five or more Members from those informed so request, the Leader may require the matter to be referred to Cabinet for determination.

If you wish to make representation on this proposed Decision please contact the relevant Portfolio Holder and the following Committee Administrator by 5.00pm on Friday 16 December 2011.

Contact Officers:

Case Officer: Steve Lincoln – slincoln@winchester.gov.uk

Committee Administrator: Nancy Graham – 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.
- Five of the parishes currently undertaking a community plan have requested financial assistance from the Council to progress and complete their work. It is recommended that support totalling £3,000 be awarded to the parishes in question.
- Community planning is one of the themes set out in the Active Communities Change Plan.

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PROPOSED DECISION

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

1. £1,000 to Shedfield Parish Plans Group towards the cost of a parish plan and village design statement.
2. £500 to Hambledon Parish Council towards the cost of a parish plan;
3. £500 to Curdridge Parish Council towards the cost of a parish plan;
4. £500 to Colden Common Village Design Statement Steering Group; and
5. £500 to South Wonston Village Design Statement Steering Group.

REASON FOR THE PROPOSED 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 Design Statements (VDS), which are advisory documents setting out clear and simple guidance for the design of all development in a village, based on its local character and distinctiveness.
- Neighbourhood Plans, which is a new concept enshrined in the Localism Act. Neighbourhood plans 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 where the local plan requires growth.

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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Community planning is one of the themes set out in the [Active Communities Change Plan](#) 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:

- Shedfield Parish Plans Group has requested £1,000. The group has recently embarked on the development and production of a parish plan and village design statement, with the request comprising £500 towards the cost of each document.
- Hambledon Parish Plan Steering Group has requested £500. The group has completed a major household consultation and is developing a programme of actions to address the key issues prior to publication of the plan. As the group has no bank account it has requested that any grant is paid to the Parish Council.
- Curdridge Parish Plan Steering Group has requested £500. The group is preparing to issue a questionnaire to all households, which will inform the final content of the plan. As the group has no bank account it has requested that any grant is paid to the Parish Council.
- Colden Common VDS Steering Group has requested £500. The group has produced an early draft of its document, which will go out for a formal period of public consultation before being published and put forward for adoption as a supplementary planning document.
- South Wonston VDS Steering Group has requested £500. The group has produced an early draft of its document, which will go out for a formal period of public consultation before being published and put forward for adoption as a supplementary planning document.

Officers have liaised with residents from each the five communities during the course of the process and are satisfied that they have been undertaken in a transparent, participative and rigorous way. The resulting documents will provide the Council and other service providers with valuable evidence of local need and opinion.

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

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

A small budget of £5,000 exists to support and enable community planning activity. There has been no call on this budget to date in 2011/12 so the total of £3,000 requested can be met in full from this budget.

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In previous years, financial support for parish plans was administered via the small grants process, with a maximum of £500. For a VDS, support was provided via a budget within Strategic Planning. This budget is no longer available due to managed budget savings within Strategic Planning. The maximum award for a VDS under previous arrangements was £2,000 - £1,000 at each of the two publication stages. Given the similar nature of the documents and the reduced level of funding available through a single budget, it seems appropriate to approve a similar level of funding for either document.

There will be local contributions towards the cost of these initiatives. Local people and organisations will contribute significant amounts of voluntary time and parish councils have contributed through financial assistance and/or free use of meeting rooms and other facilities.

CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN ON THE PROPOSED 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

Councillor John Cooper – Portfolio Holder for Communities, Safety and Public Health