

Clevedon Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Report to Clevedon Town Council December 2016

Purpose:

- This is the third report to the Town Council on the work of its Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.
- The Group has met seven times and this report is to update the Council and make a recommendation that the Council allocate money within its budget for work on the plan in the budget year 2017-18.

Information:

The Steering Group continues to meet and focus three main areas:

1. The Neighbourhood Plan process and its relationship to the District Local Plan cycle
2. Developing awareness and communication with people across Clevedon
3. Considering resources needed to support the development of a Neighbourhood Plan

The Steering Group has completed its project of initial engagement with the public in Clevedon to create awareness of what a Neighbourhood Plan is, the plan timescale (to 2036) and to draw out views on Clevedon and its future to help create a vision and objectives for the plan. A successful day of public engagement took place on the 24th September at the Farmers' Market in the morning of (using a room in the Baptist Church) and in the afternoon at the Tides festival. A small team from the Steering Group displayed information and talked with dozens of people on both sites with many completing response forms.

In addition, response boxes have been placed in several locations and responses from all these sources have had an initial analysis, reported to the December Steering Group. As well as this one day efforts, members of the Steering Group have been talking with a number of community organisations in the town informally to the same end.

A second analysis will follow soon as part of the process of establishing the Vision and Objectives for the plan. The intention is to consider these in January before moving onto developing work on key subject areas in the plan. The Steering Group has agreed a draft plan timetable and communications framework.

However, at its December meeting, the Planning Officer reported that North Somerset Council intends to move to the first stage of preparing its next Local Plan (to 2036) in Spring 2017 by notification and invitation of representations under Local Plans regulations (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/767/regulation/18/made>). This is with a view to submitting their Local Plan by summer 2018.

This timescale is important for a Clevedon Neighbourhood Plan if it is to provide a coherent and timely input into the shaping of the Local Plan rather than a reactive response to decisions already made.

The Steering Group believes this is achievable. However, for the Neighbourhood Plan to stand mandatory external assessment and a local referendum there will need to be evident extensive engagement with the community. Whilst this can continue to be done effectively by contact work, press releases and social media, it is likely that the external assessor will expect that every household has been able to respond to the plan by receiving direct mailings. This is likely to need to be in two stages.

Clevedon is one of the bigger towns considering preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. This means that the costs of providing every household on the parish roll with information on the plan is likely to be higher than the maximum grant available from the government (£9000).

The Steering Group has estimated that a conservative budget of £16,000 is likely to be needed during 2017-18 to cover two mailings with a £1000 for other costs. As previously reported the Group intends to apply for grant assistance of £9000 from the Department of Communities & Local Government. As a consequence, this report is recommending that the Council allocate the balance of this amount, £7000, in its budget for 2017-18 for expenditure against approved invoices for the Neighbourhood Plan. Confirmation of this budget will be included the application for Department of Communities & Local Government grant aid to Locality.

Recommendation:

1. The Council agrees to allocate £7000 in its budget for 2017-18 for the work of the Neighbourhood Plan particularly to cover costs of mailing to households on the parish roll.
2. This expenditure will be paid by the Council against invoices that have been approved by the Steering Group Chair and the designated member of the Town Council.

Peter Templeton
Chair of Steering
Group