

## **REPORT TO PICKMERE PARISH COUNCIL**

**7<sup>th</sup> September 2021**

### **AGENDA ITEM 8.2      NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – NOTE OF CURRENT PROGRESS**

#### **1      REPORT**

1.1 Since its previous consideration by Council, progress has been achieved on several aspects of the preparation of the parish's Neighbourhood Plan (NP):

- Government grant has now been received for expenditure required during the period to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, in the sum of £6279. This grant is available for payment of fees to the Council's professional planning consultant, for printing etc. and any other costs attributable to the preparation of the plan. Any balance unspent by 31<sup>st</sup> March will have to be returned to Government, but this does not prevent a new application being made to cover the year April 2022 to end March 2023, with the overall total maximum grant award to the Parish Council being £10,000.
- Interviews have now been held with those residents who wished to volunteer for either the NP Steering Group (SG) or the Consultation Group (CG). As a result, 4 volunteers have been selected for the SG, which by decision of the Council is restricted to a size of 4 parish councillors and 4 residents. The CG has no limit on how many residents may be included. In selecting the 4 SG volunteers, regard was had to the types of skill, knowledge and outlook that would be required to enable preparation of the Plan, and the qualities that have been incorporated in the selection of volunteers including: knowledge of Pickmere and its functioning, specific awareness and knowledge of how the large agricultural landowners in the parish operate, and their particular needs, knowledge and experience of the NP process itself, etc.

1.2 The next key step, once the 'applicants' have been notified of these decisions is to hold an initial meeting of the Steering Group so as to commence the organisation of initial data gathering, the establishment of timelines and milestones for the preparation process, etc.

1.3 An early requirement in this respect is the establishment of a 'Zoom' account to enable online SG and CG (and perhaps other meetings), thereby facilitating efficiency in the use of time and other resources. The cost is approximately £15 per month including VAT.

1.4 Such a cost was included in the Government grant application and is incorporated in the grant figure referred to in paragraph 1.1. Accordingly your Clerk has authorised such expenditure in accordance with the powers delegated to him by Council.

1.5 The report earlier on this agenda at item 7.3 referred to the inability to pay for a Zoom subscription by BACS or by cheque, and the inconvenience this brings. For this reason it is

suggested that before any new 'Zoom' account is opened, other alternative providers be investigated and used if considered appropriate by the Clerk in consultation with the Chair.

## **2. RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 That the report be noted.

Jack Steel  
Clerk to the Parish Council