

## **REPORT TO PICKMERE PARISH COUNCIL**

**6<sup>th</sup> June 2023**

### **AGENDA ITEM 9.5 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

#### **1. REPORT**

- 1.1 The Council resolved to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan several years ago. It has carried out a comprehensive community survey in the parish about wide-ranging issues and has held various consultation exercises.
- 1.2 Grant aid from Government was received in both 2021-22 and 2022-23, and the Council has also earmarked funds in its reserves for the project.
- 1.3 An initial draft of policies, with many gaps to be filled and decisions to be made, has been prepared by the Council's professional planning consultant. A wildlife study has been carried out by Cheshire Wildlife Trust.
- 1.4 The outgoing Council appointed a NP Working Group (i.e. a sub-group of councillors) to work on the Plan, and in turn that group appointed, with Council's approval, a NP Steering Group composed of both Working Group members and also 4 Pickmere residents. If the Plan is to proceed further, Council needs to decide whether similar arrangements need to be made.
- 1.5 The Government grant for NPs has to be applied for on an annual basis, and any money not spent within the year has to be returned to the Government, and a new application made for further grant for the forthcoming year. There is an overall limit of £10,000 grant. The grant received so far has been used to pay for consultant input as well as graphics/printing etc for surveys and presentation material etc.
- 1.6 The current position is:
  - An unspent amount of the grant for 2022-23 (approximately £650) has to be returned to the Government as soon as possible, and the Council is being chased on a frequent basis by the relevant body.
  - The Council's planning consultant, who is employed by Cheshire Community Action, very recently informed the Council that she is about to leave that post and that CCA does not intend to refill it. Accordingly there will be a need to find a replacement consultant if the Plan is to proceed further.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That members consider how to proceed.

**Jack Steel**

**Acting Clerk to the Parish Council**