

COTHERSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Neighbourhood Plan

Author Clerk
Meeting date 10 July 2019

1. Background

Neighbourhood Planning was introduced in the Localism Act of 2011 to enable parishes and communities to have a say on the development of a plan as a supporting document to the overall County Durham Development Plan and carries weight in the planning decision making process. Cotherstone Parish Council has always worked closely with the planning authority to maintain the character of the village and surrounding areas and for the protection of the village 'open spaces' and Conservation Areas. Previous documents that were developed to support the former Teesdale Planning Authority included a Village Design Statement (2002) and a Parish Plan (2006). The Neighbourhood Plan will supersede these previous documents.

Cotherstone Parish Council submitted a Neighbourhood Area application in December 2014 and consultation was subsequently undertaken by both the Parish Council and the County Council. The specified area corresponds to the parish boundaries of the parish council.

A Cotherstone Neighbourhood Planning Group was established to develop the Neighbourhood Plan, comprising two members of the Parish Council and a number of other residents. Membership has changed over the five years, but Parish Council representation on the group has been key.

The Cotherstone Neighbourhood Planning Group currently comprises 9 residents, with Cllr Richard Hunter chairing the group and Lynn Metcalfe being its Clerk. Planning consultant Shaun Hanson, of Planning Advise Plus, has been commissioned to offer professional planning advice to the Group. Cloe liaison with Durham County Council's Spatial Policy Team has been maintained throughout the process.

The Cotherstone Neighbourhood Plan Group has kept residents informed of progress through newsletters sent electronically or hand-delivered to individual households as well as being displayed in village noticeboards, at the village post office and at the village's pubs; updates have also been reported in *Our Cotherstone*.

As part of the initial establishment of the Neighbourhood Plan Group's work and publicity of it, a website was set-up and this is currently the Parish Council's only website (domain name cotherstoneparishcouncil.org.uk).

2. The current situation and next steps

The Cotherstone Neighbourhood Plan Group reports that the Plan is nearing the final stages of development.

The majority of Chapters to the Plan (covering the policies of Heritage Assets, Green Spaces and Village Setting, Design of New Development, Housing and Business/Employment) have been completed, with policy documents shared with Durham County Council's Planning Policy and Heritage Officers and final checks being made for alignment with the overall Durham County Plan.

Within the next two months, a second consultation event, at Cotherstone Village Hall, will present the Plan to the local community for comment. A newsletter will be issued to publicise this event. Once the final Plan has been recommended for approval by an external examiner, the final stage of the Neighbourhood Plan is a referendum organised and paid for by Durham County Council. There are strict rules for these referendums and the question will be 'Do you want Durham County Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Cotherstone to help it decide planning applications in the

neighbourhood area?’ Anyone registered to vote in the parish will be entitled to vote and a simple majority of votes (over 50% of those voting) in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan is sufficient for it to succeed.

If the Plan passes the referendum, Durham County Council will adopt the Neighbourhood Plan, publish it on its website and future planning applications will take into account the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan as well as those in the County Durham Plan.

3. Income and expenditure for Neighbourhood Plan work

A detailed account of income and expenditure is provided at Appendix 1.

Government has provided grant support for Neighbourhood Plan Groups, to a maximum of £9,000 per Plan area.

Across the country, the average cost of producing a Neighbourhood Plan for an area the size of Cotherstone has been between £21k and £25k.

Cotherstone Neighbourhood Plan group has been fortunate to receive a total of £19,391 in grants and donations. To date a total of £22,365.84 has been spent or committed; a further £2,100 is anticipated to be needed. The shortfall between expenditure and income over the entire project is therefore £4,974.84.

Cotherstone Parish Council has to date not paid any of the Neighbourhood Plan costs from its own resources, merely acting as accountable body receiving grant income and paying expenditure against it. However, the Parish Council has been prudent in earmarking £2,500 of reserves in its 2019/20 budget and in keeping its general reserves at the upper end of that recommended for a parish council.

The Parish Council is being asked to contribute £5,000 to the Neighbourhood Plan project. The impact that this would have on the Parish Council’s reserves is detailed in Appendix 1.

Recommendations

1. To note the background to Neighbourhood Planning and the work and progress of the Cotherstone Neighbourhood Plan Group to date.
2. To note the current position and next steps in the Neighbourhood Plan process.
3. To note the income and expenditure account for Neighbourhood Plan work to date and to consider a request for financial support of £5,000 from the Parish Council to complete the Neighbourhood Plan work, £2,500 of this from earmarked reserves and £2,500 from general reserves.

Appendix 1: Cotherstone Neighbourhood Plan income and expenditure account

Cotherstone Neighbourhood Plan Account

Date	Details	Income	Payments
01/03/2015	Locality - grant (NPG-00955) for designation status work, training and website	£5,591.00	
25/03/2015	Planning Advice Plus		£4,000.00
24/03/2015	Press Ahead - printing NP		£48.00
24/03/2015	Mark Armstrong - website NP		£250.00
08/04/2015	Cotherstone village hall - 3 meetings NP		£135.00
08/04/2015	Mark Armstrong - website NP		£250.00
08/04/2015	Mark Armstrong - website NP		£250.00
13/05/2015	Press Ahead - printing NP		£452.00
08/06/2015	Repayment of unused grant		£206.00
	Sub-totals	£5,591.00	£5,591.00
18/05/2015	Groundwork - first grant (NPG-01197) to Stage 1 consultation and Housing policy development	£7,237.00	
15/06/2015	Planning Advice Plus - NP		£2,750.00
22/07/2015	Cotherstone village hall - 3 meetings NP		£99.00
09/09/2015	Planning Advice Plus - NP		£1,500.00
14/10/2015	D Pennock - printing and postage NP		£110.00
14/10/2015	Cotherstone village hall - 2 meetings NP		£84.00
30/10/2015	Planning Advice Plus - NP		£750.00
04/12/2015	Planning Advice Plus - NP		£1,750.00
11/12/2015	Postage		£0.63
10/02/2016	Hall hire - 2 meetings - NP		£34.00
	Removed to reserves for NP printing hall costs		£159.37
	Sub-totals	£ 7,237.00	£7,237.00
05/02/2016	Groundwork - second grant (NPG-01860) to take to £8k from Groundwork	£ 763.00	
17/03/2016	Planning Advice Plus - NP		£750.00
07/03/2016	Village hall hire (part)		£13.00
	Sub-totals	£ 763.00	£763.00
06/05/2016	Groundwork - third grant (NPG-02120) to take to £9k cap	£ 1,000.00	
12/10/2016	Planning Advice Plus - NP		£ 1,000.00
	Sub-totals	£ 1,000.00	£ 1,000.00
14/09/2016	Village Hall Hire		£ 119.00
18/01/2017	Neighbourhood Plan Donation (GSK)	£ 500.00	
18/01/2017	Neighbourhood Plan Donation	£ 300.00	
06/02/2017	Neighbourhood Plan Donation	£ 1,000.00	
06/02/2017	Neighbourhood Plan Donation	£ 1,000.00	
06/02/2017	Neighbourhood Plan Donation	£ 1,000.00	
06/02/2017	Neighbourhood Plan Donation	£ 1,000.00	
08/03/2017	Village Hall Hire		£ 28.00
17/18	Planning Advice Plus		£2,750.00
08/11/2017	Printing		£43.84
17/18	Village Hall hire		£126.00
06/06/2018	Planning Advice Plus		£750.00
06/06/2018	Stu Kent		£400.00
12/09/2018	Village Hall hire		£28.00
12/09/2018	Planning Advice Plus		£500.00
13/02/2019	Planning Advice Plus		£1,000.00
13/02/2019	Village Hall hire		£30.00
12/06/2019	Planning Advice Plus		£1,000.00
	Committed		£1,000.00
?	Planning Advice Plus - possible further three days		£1,500.00
?	Printing - 10 hard copies of final plan		£500.00
?	Second consultation event - newsletter (£70), hall hire (£30)		£100.00
?	Referendum paid for by DCC		£0.00
	Sub-totals	£4,800.00	£9,774.84
	GRAND TOTAL	£19,391.00	£24,465.84

Contribution needed to complete Neighbourhood Plan		£4,974.84
Earmarked Parish Council reserves 2019/20 for Neighbourhood Plan	£2,500.00	
So, amount needed from general reserves	£2,474.84	
In Parish Council general reserves for 2019/20	£9,498.00	
Request for reserves to be transferred	£2,500.00	
Leaving general reserves at	£6,998.00	
which equates to 103% of 2019/20 precept		