Present: Jemma McLean, Julian Chillingworth, Claire Rose, Sue Holland, Kim Gubler

Apologies: Mike Peebles, Chris Evans

**Jemma: Intro**

Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity - independent communities development organisation

Jemma (Community Engagement Team Leader) is in charge of Community-led Planning, incl. Neighbourhood Plans (NPlans introduced 2011)

Service level agreement with BBC

Can help with setting up, logistics, helping apply for funding, reaching out to the community, attend some SG meetings, comment on community questionnaires and be available by phone/email

Need to be in contact with BBC at policy writing stage to ensure that we are in line with wider policy.

Sonia also at BBC - main contact there.

Some groups do policies themselves, some work with Sonia, others bring in planning consultant. Jemma can help with signposting technical planning advice and getting contact details

*Do we bring in a planning consultant early on?*

List of recommendations? Can’t give, but…

* talk with other parishes and NP groups to see who they have used.

**Assistance from BBC?**

- stay in contact with Sonia throughout

Day to day contact can go to Jemma, or she can talk to Sonia.

Sonia is main contact at BBC.

Environmental impact? Highways? Etc. Sonia can liaise on our behalf.

Sonia will give us the ‘link-in’ to who we need to talk to.

**Funding?**

Locality - administer NPlan funding - <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/>

*Take a look at their website - apply for funding*

Basic Grant Support £10,000 - eligible for that - fairly straightforward. Has to be spent within financial year. Any unspent money needs to be returned.

So break it up… now is a good time to apply as most of the year left. Min. of £1000.

*Has the group previously applied for any allocation? Don’t think so but check. Also check 2015 rule.*

*At what stage do we apply for funding? - when will we need professional consultancy?*

*Need to decide what to do this year and what needs funding so we can apply ASAP.*

In addition, there is also higher level grant support - can apply for an additional £8000, BUT criteria might not apply to us. If we allocate land for housing, then can apply. That is the only criteria we would be eligible under (esp. if considering doing anyway).

Technical Support packages - can also apply for these - provides us with professionals. e.g. Site assessment and appraisals, design statements, Plan healthcheck to check the draft plan.

Can apply for Tech. Support Packages as well but only if we meet this additional criteria for further funding. The only criteria we would be eligible under is, again, allocation designated land for housing.

**Information sources?**

BBC, Local Plan online, draft 2040 Local Plan, Planning Portal for previous and future planning applications. Were they approved/ denied? What were the reasons?

Census data - 2021 census where ONS can filter down to a Parish level

*Jemma will send the link for Census 2021.*

**Biggest problems from other groups?**

Can be a long process

‘Differing opinions’ is the main issue that can derail NPlan drafts - writing planning policy so need a consensus.

Communication and transparency is key.

Keeping village and parish updated.

Ensuring minutes are available for people to look at.

Publicity and community engagement from the start.

Everyone needs to feel like they’ve had an input, even if the final version is not exactly what they wanted.

Examiner will look at fairness of process, etc.

**Process of assessment? Examiner.**

At this point - draft plan presented to the examiner - will have had an opportunity before this point with a consultant and BBC to read through and change the draft plan as needed.

BBC pay for it to go to an examiner.

Do we get an opportunity to reflect?

Yes - Examiner can comment and we can make changes before it progresses to referendum

(none in Bedfordshire that haven’t gone to referendum).

Everyone on electoral roll, need more than 50% ‘yes’ (no min voter turnout though).

If people are involved and supportive throughout the process, then they’ll go through.

If failed, plans were where communities had very little input.

**Locality document - engagement point**

Tips - small meetings/ workshops? Anything else that works well and at what stages?

Steering group - that’s us - and 4 is bigger than many groups!

People may become more familiar and more interested as the process progresses.

Different consultations throughout - online, events, talks, door to door, etc.

Individuals who don’t want to join the Steering Group but are happy to help out - can appeal for certain sections. Buy in the resources when needed.

e.g. housing needs surveys, infrastructure plans, data analysis

Consultants billing? Daily rate.

*Identify which bits we want help with.*