

MINUTES of an **Extraordinary Meeting** of the **Full Plaistow and Ifold Parish Council** held on **Tuesday 8th August 2023** at **19:30**, Winterton Hall, Plaistow.

Please note: - These minutes are to be read in conjunction with the [Clerk's Report](#), which can be found at the end of these minutes ([here](#)) and which was published on the Parish Council's [website](#) with the [agenda](#) in advance of the meeting. The Clerk's Report provides all necessary background information for the matters considered at the meeting.

Present Cllr. Paul Jordan (Chair of the Parish Council); Cllr. Sophie Capsey (Vice Chair of the Parish Council); Cllr. Phil Colmer (Chair of the Finance Committee); Cllr. Rick Robinson; Cllr. Sarah Denyer; Cllr. Andrew Woolf; Cllr. Doug Brown and Catherine Nutting (Clerk & RFO).

Three (3) members of the public (MOP) were in attendance in person and two (2) MOP were in attendance remotely, via Zoom.

District Councillor Charles Todhunter was in attendance.

C/23/117 **Apologies for absence & housekeeping**
Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr. Nicholas Taylor and Cllr. Jane Price (who attended the meeting remotely, in her capacity as a MOP).

District Councillor Gareth Evans sent his apologies.

C/23/118 **Disclosure of Interests**
None received.

C/23/119 **Public Forum** Action:
Clerk
A MOP spoke about their interest to establish a table tennis group at the Winterton Hall, Plaistow. Their details will be passed to the Winterton Hall Management Committee.

C/23/120 **Neighbourhood Plan**
For all matters considered, please refer to the details contained within the [Clerk's Report](#).

To consider if the Parish Council wishes to develop a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP).

The Chair advised the meeting that the Clerk had no vested interest

in the decision-making of the Council and thanked the Clerk for preparing comprehensive information for Councillors to consider in advance of the meeting.

The Chair provided a summary of the previous, aborted Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) that the Parish Council began in 2012 and ceased in February 2022, at Examination stage, due to Water Neutrality issues. *The Parish Council's website ([here](#)) provides comprehensive detail of the issues faced by the previous NDP process.*

The Chair explained that any decision made during the current meeting, would be to prepare a wholly new NDP, and not a 'revival' of the previous NDP.

Cllr. Woolf provided an overview of a meeting with Chichester District Council (CDC) attended on 7th August by himself, the Clerk and Chair. This meeting was an information gathering exercise to ascertain CDC's support and involvement in the NDP process, in view of concerns raised by Wisborough Green Parish Council regarding significant delay experienced by their NDP review process.

The main points to note were: -

- The recent administration change has not altered the forthright intention to achieve an adopted Local Plan (LP).
- LP to enter Examination stage autumn 2023 and unlikely to conclude this stage until spring 2024.
- CDC will adopt the LP once the Examination stage concludes (likely late spring 2024).
- CDC's Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) process (used to allocate sites for development to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply and 'mop up' any LP housing allocations which are not being taken forward/progressing quickly enough) would likely begin 1 year after the LP has been adopted (2025).
- If a NDP wishes to allocate a site(s) for the LP housing allocation, it must be beyond its Regulation 14 consultation stage (ideally a made NDP) by the time the DPD process begins.
- If a NDP does not include a site(s) for LP housing, or progress of the NDP is delayed, then CDC will identify a site via its DPD process.
- The DPD process would likely identify one (1) strategic site

for the development of the whole LP housing allocation for the Parish (currently 25 houses). The benefit of a NDP allocating the LP housing is that it can identify multiple sites, across the Parish area, and divide up the total allocation between them.

- CDC is supportive of NDPs.
- CDC's preferred method of LP Parish housing allocation is via NDPs.
- There will be no urgency to demonstrate early housing delivery in the north of the LP area due to water neutrality issues. Focus will be on development in the south of the district once the LP has been adopted. Therefore, evidence at Examination is that Parish Councils are willing to allocate LP housing and are progressing NDP.
- Any NDP could not 'overtake' the LP process. It must wait until the LP has concluded its Examination before it goes through its Regulation 14 consultation. It must be sure its policies are strategically aligned with the final LP – which is subject to change during Examination. Preparatory works can begin, up to (but not including) the Regulation 14 stage.
- CDC will be unable to provide the Parish Council with a timely Screening Opinion on the need for either a Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) or Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as Natural England have not issued clear advice. This may cause some initial delay to a NDP.
- Local Green Space can be allocated within CDC's DPD process, rather than via a NDP.
- Consider carefully the need for a NDP / what the NDP wishes to achieve if it does not allocate the LP housing. What additional protection will a NDP offer above the LP?
- Consider West Wittering's NDP as an example of a NDP that does not allocate housing and appends a Village Design Statement. (At Examination stage and based on the current, out-dated LP).

The meeting discussed that the current housing allocation in the LP (25) is modest and that identifying site(s) is likely to be controversial within the community. The CDC DPD process is efficient and any NDP could formulate general housing policy and a design code to manage any housing development which comes forward (not just within the LP) without incurring potential controversy.

The meeting agreed that it is impossible to please everyone by its decision-making and there will be those who may criticise the Parish Council for not allocating site(s) for the LP housing and choosing to allow CDC to identify one strategic site somewhere in the Parish.

The meeting considered some of the historic issues faced by the previous NDP development process, which sought to allocate the LP housing but ended up allocating additional housing due to delay in progressing the NDP. The meeting agreed that the Council should learn from the past.

The meeting considered the emerging West Wittering NDP ([here](#)) particularly its general housing policy on page 22.

The meeting discussed an updated Housing Needs Assessment to ascertain the requirements of the community and if housing policy within a NDP can be nuanced to take into consideration the differences of the four distinct settlements within the parish. The meeting agreed that each settlement area has different needs and aesthetics.

The meeting was sympathetic to the idea that allocating the LP housing within a NDP could mitigate the possible concern of the total number being built in one location. The Parish Council could consider the Parish's settlement areas and housing needs and consider dividing up the allocation across the Parish with different housing policies particular to each area.

The meeting discussed that having a made NDP would bring forward 25% of [Community Infrastructure Levy](#) (C.I.L) – currently 15% without a NDP; which would see a large amount of income for the Parish Council to put towards qualifying community projects. If the Parish must 'take' housing from the LP – 10 from the current LP and 25 in the emerging LP (subject to change) – it would be better to maximise the financial support from this development.

The meeting acknowledged that other sites within the parish are currently either subject to planning applications or are with developers under consideration and therefore the Parish is not immune from future development. A NDP would help support the community manage development.

The Clerk advised the meeting of CDC's process to assess / include Parish Open Green Space within their Site Allocation Development Plan Document, as an alternative to a NDP.

The meeting considered how any future changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) might impact the LPs progress through Examination and a NDP. There has been delay in the Government's proposed changes to the NPPF. It is unclear what 'at an advanced stage' means for a LP to take advantage of a 4-year housing land supply (rather than the current 5-year); CDC has a 4.7-year housing land supply. However, as things stand, communities remain vulnerable to speculative development.

The meeting noted that there remains uncertainty around the issues of Water Neutrality and the impact this might have on a NDP. Natural England is yet to provide Local Planning Authorities such as CDC with clear guidance to follow when issuing Screening Opinions on planning applications and NDPs in terms of the need for Habitat Regulation Assessments and Strategic Environmental Assessments. This could cause initial delay for a NDP.

The Clerk provided the meeting with information about NDP grant funding and technical support. It was generally assumed and agreed that were Government to cease providing any grant funding to NDPs, it would also cease its support for their development generally and any reliance upon them within the planning system. To date, there is nothing to suggest that the current Government, or future political parties, are 'anti' NDPs; or that any of the proposed changes to the NPPF will undermine NDPs.

The meeting acknowledged that, although it would need to spend some of the Precept on developing a NDP (and future reviews of the NDP), during the current financial year, the expenditure for Consultant support would come from Government grants. Were the funding window not to re-open after 31st March 2024, the Parish Council could decide to cease preparing a NDP without having incurred its own financial loss.

In the future, the Parish Council could decide not to review / update its NDP. Whilst this would reduce the usefulness / application of many of its policies in decision making, the Parish Council would continue to have a 'made' NDP and benefit from 25% CIL.

The Chair invited the Council to vote on whether or not it wanted to develop a NDP?

The motion was proposed by Cllr. Capsey and seconded by Cllr. Robinson.

The Council **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY** to **DEVELOP** a **NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN**.

The Chair then asked the Council to consider the allocation of housing and inclusion of housing policy. The matter was broken down into three (3) separate votes: -

1. To consider if the Neighbourhood Development Plan should allocate site(s) for the Parish's Local Plan housing allocation.

The motion was proposed by Cllr. Woolf and seconded by Cllr. Brown.

Cllr. Capsey – No
Cllr. Colmer – No
Cllr. Paul Jordan – No
Cllr. Rick Robinson – Yes
Cllr. Sarah Denyer – Yes
Cllr. Andrew Woolf – Yes
Cllr. Doug Brown – abstained

In accordance with [Standing Order 3\(r\)](#), due to an equality of votes, the Chair used his casting vote: -

Cllr. Paul Jordan – No

The Council **RESOLVED NOT** to **ALLOCATE SITE(S)** for the Parish's **LOCAL PLAN HOUSING ALLOCATION**.

2. To consider if the Neighbourhood Development Plan should allocate additional housing above that specified within the Local Plan.

The motion was proposed by Cllr. Denyer and seconded by Cllr. Capsey.

The Council **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY NOT** to **ALLOCATE ADDITIONAL HOUSING** within its Neighbourhood Development Plan.

3. To consider if the Neighbourhood Development Plan should include general housing policy to manage any development which comes forward.

The motion was proposed by Cllr. Colmer and seconded by Cllr. Woolf.

The Council **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY** to **INCLUDE GENERAL HOUSING POLICY** within its Neighbourhood Development Plan.

The Chair then invited the Council to consider if it wanted to include a Design Code within its NDP.

The meeting discussed that it had previously developed a comprehensive 'Village Design Statement' (in draft) to ensure considerate and consistent development design within the parish. However, unless it is included within a NDP as a Design Code, it is not planning policy and therefore has no application in decision-making. The previous draft document can be updated / amended for inclusion.

The motion to include a Design Code within the NDP was proposed by Cllr. Robinson and seconded by Cllr. Colmer.

The Council **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY** to **INCLUDE a DESIGN CODE** within its Neighbourhood Development Plan.

The Chair invited the Council to consider the quote from Colin Smith Planning Ltd and vote on their instruction to undertake the majority of the work (as opposed to providing guidance, advice and review of the work carried out by the Parish Council via a Steering Group).

The meeting agreed that it should learn from the past and prioritise speed, accuracy, and the avoidance of conflict. Due to Colin Smith Planning Ltd's involvement with the previous NDP, which was aborted, they are familiar with the issues of Water Neutrality, the Parish area and many of the policies and background evidence to be

reviewed / re-worked / updated. Using the same consultant will significantly reduce time and cost. The full Council will make decisions and not establish a Steering Group at this time.

The Clerk advised that in accordance with [Financial Regulation 11.1\(a\)](#), the instruction of an expert to prepare the NDP is exempt from the Council's ordinary procedure for awarding contracts due to it being a 'specialist service'.

The Council **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY** to **APPROVE** the **FEE ESTIMATE** of **£22,050**, dated 11.04.2023 and **INSTRUCT COLIN SMITH PLANNING LTD** to undertake the **MAJORITY** of the **WORK** to prepare the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Finally, the Council considered the grant and technical support programme.

The meeting discussed the need to manage publicity. The Clerk advised that the process to develop a NDP is set out in regulations and legislation, which includes mandatory public consultation – both 'in person' events and written material e.g., leaflets/newsletters. The community must agree with and support the NDP; it will only be 'made' once it passes referendum – the community voting to adopt or reject the NDP.

The grant funding can be applied to both the consultant's fees as well as associated costs incurred by the Council in developing its NDP e.g., printing and publicity and venue hire. However, the Consultant's estimated total fee will exceed the maximum grant funding available for a 'technical NDP' – one that includes a Design Code – of £18,000. Therefore, the Council's Precept will have to meet some of the costs associated with making a NDP. However, many of the miscellaneous costs e.g., producing a newsletter are costs the Council would already meet and so the additional costs should not be too onerous.

The Council **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY** to **APPLY** for the **MAXIMUM GRANT** and **TECHNICAL SUPPORT AVAILABLE**.

C/23/121

Meeting Dates

The Council **NOTED** the following forthcoming meetings: -

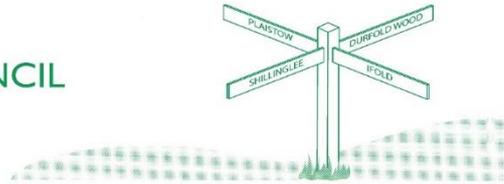
- Planning & Open Spaces Committee, 29th August 2023,

Actions:
Clerk

Winterton Hall, Plaistow

- Planning & Open Spaces Committee, 12th September 2023, Kelsey Hall, Ifold – 7pm
- Winter & Emergency Plan Committee, 12th September 2023, Kelsey Hall, Ifold – 7:45pm
- Full Parish Council, 13th September 2023, Kelsey Hall, Ifold – 7:45pm

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 21:15



CLERK'S REPORT

Neighbourhood Plans

What is neighbourhood planning?

- Neighbourhood Plans (NP) give communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area.
- Neighbourhood planning is not a legal requirement, but a right which communities in England can choose to use.
- Neighbourhood planning provides the opportunity for communities to set out a positive vision for how they want their community to develop over the years in ways that meet identified local need and make sense for local people.
- Communities can put in place policies that will help deliver that vision.
- Policies within a NP can includes those that protect the local environment, local wildlife, its ancient woodland and open green spaces; policies which protect its heritage buildings and history; policies which protect local assets such as sporting grounds; policies which consider improvements to local infrastructure such as mitigating flood risks and improved foul drainage capacity, cycle ways, footpaths and communication technology; policies which consider renewable energy development and climate change; policies to support the local economy; policies to support public transport, traffic calming and highway safety and policies on housing and other development, including design.
- Like all planning policy, a NP must be written positively. It is not a document of 'do not' / 'cannot'; its policies determine what is acceptable: -
 - *"The use of dwellings as live/work units will be supported if ..."*

- *“Proposals that result in the loss of employment generating uses or business premises will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that ...”*
 - *“Any new residential development, whether for new units or extensions or conversions of existing dwellings will be supported provided that ...”*
 - *“The Neighbourhood Plan will support proposals for redevelopment of existing plots, replacement dwellings and extensions to existing dwellings within the Settlement Boundary provided that ...”*
- Communities take a proactive approach in preparing the NP, via consultation and engagement. The final Plan must be made with the consent of the community via a referendum.
 - If Plaistow and Ifold had a made NP, it would benefit from 25% of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) revenue which arises from qualifying development within the Parish, that Chichester District Council collects from developers. Without a made NP, the parish receives 15% of CIL.
 - Through a NP, the community can choose where they want new homes, shops, and offices to be built – this is not a requirement of a having a NP, but one of the many options that can be included within a Plan.
 - A NP can support the provision of affordable homes for sale that meet the needs of local people by including relevant policies.
 - The community can have a say on what new buildings should look like and what infrastructure should be provided.

Planning Policy

- A NP sets out planning policies that sit alongside the Local Plan, prepared by the Local Planning Authority (LPA).
- Chichester District Council (CDC) is Plaistow and Ifold’s LPA.
- Once made (approved at a referendum), a NP attains the same legal status as the Local Plan. However, the further along in the development process a NP becomes, some weight can be attached to its emerging policies (before it reaches referendum).

- Decisions on planning applications are made by the LPA using both the Local Plan and the NP, and any other material considerations such as national planning policy.
- If someone does not like a planning decision made by the LPA, they can appeal the decision to the Planning Inspectorate. When the Planning Inspector rules on the matter, they too consider and apply NP policies, alongside national planning policy and policies within the Local Development Plan.

Review

- Like all planning policy, a NP must be kept under review and updated. It must align with both national planning policy and Chichester's Local Plan.
- A NP must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan in force.
- There is no requirement to review or update a NP. However, NP policies may become out of date, for example if they conflict with policies in the Local Plan or any changes in national planning policy.
- Like all planning policy, a NP's policies are based on evidence. Over time, the evidence base becomes out of date.
- In planning terms, the more recent planning policies take precedence – whether this be in NPs or the Local Plan. Where a policy has been in force for a period, other material considerations may be given greater weight in planning decisions as the evidence base for the policy becomes less robust.
- Therefore, over time, varying degrees of weight will be applied to NP policies by the LPA / Planning Inspector in the decision-making process. Different policies within the NP will be given different weight – some policies will 'age' quicker than others.
- Typically, therefore, a Neighbourhood Plan is reviewed / updated every 5 years; however, this timescale can be shorter depending on the Local Plan review timetable and any major changes to national planning policy.
- The whole NP may not need updating, only certain policies (and their evidence base).

- NPs are no different to Chichester's Local Plan in this respect – its policies are based on evidence and 'get old' over time and require updating.

Housing & housing policy

- Housing allocation for the Parish is included in Chichester's Local Plan.
- In the current Local Plan 2014-2029, the Parish has 10 houses allocated. Chichester District Council has selected a site for this development in Ifold. When the private landowner of the identified site wishes to sell, this site is likely to come forward for this approved development.
- Chichester's emerging Local Plan 2021 – 2039 seeks to allocate Plaistow and Ifold 25 houses (in addition to the 10 allocated under the current Local Plan).
- This housing number will be considered by a Planning Inspector, chosen by the government to examine Chichester's Local Plan and report on their findings. The Local Plan's Examination process is likely to be held towards the latter half of 2023.
- The number of houses allocated to Plaistow and Ifold could change due to the Examination process.
- Although Chichester's emerging Local Plan does not include the proposals for Crouchlands Farm, this site will be considered by the Planning Inspector during the Examination process.
- Changes to the Local Plan may be required because of the Examination process (inquisitorial hearings held with the Inspector). Any changes would be subject to a 6-week consultation before the Examination ends. Once the Planning Inspector is happy with Chichester's Local Plan it will be adopted and become Planning Policy.
- Housing can be included in a NP - but does not have to be.
- Chichester's emerging Local Plan aims to deliver the Plaistow and Ifold housing allocation (25 houses – subject to change) via a Parish NP - as the preferred method.
- If the Parish does not have a NP or has a NP that does not allocate the housing, Chichester District Council will choose a site for this development via their own

process (as they have previously done with the 10 allocated under the current Local Plan).

- If the NP was to deliver the Local Plan housing allocation, it would look at various sites within the Parish via a 'call for sites' process. Landowners would put forward their land, or the Parish would identify suitable land, which would all be considered against various planning, housing need and feasibility criteria until the most suitable site for the development can be selected.
- A NP does not have to select a site for the housing allocated in the Local Plan. However, the benefit of doing so is that the community has control of *where* the development will take place; otherwise, the community must accept Chichester's process and decision.
- A NP can develop general **housing policy**, which manages development within the Parish wherever it comes from; (either the Local Plan housing, or other speculative development). In this way, the community can consider its housing need and housing priorities, including design and materials, build density (the number of houses built in a defined space) and housing type.
- If the Parish does not have a NP / does not have a NP with housing policy (or a NP that allocates a site for the Local Plan houses), then Chichester District Council will allocate the site for the development of the houses – the 'where'. However, what type of housing would be built on the site will be determined by the developer (within the planning process) and does not have to comply with the community's housing need / housing priorities.
- Therefore, developing housing policies within a NP is a good way for a community to have control of what is built in the Parish; even if it chooses not to say where houses are to be built.
- Housing development in the Parish is inevitable – either via the Local Plan, or via speculative development which can achieve planning permission. Housing development is not just large-scale developments, but also extensions, replacement dwellings and small-scale development. Private landowners can sell their land for development and the granting of planning permission is made by the LPA via the application of planning policy.

- Housing policy within a NP would allow the community to formulate relevant planning policy applicable to decision making.
- During the NP development process, a community Housing Needs Assessment will be undertaken to consider what housing the local community needs; for example, the community might need smaller homes for older people to 'downsize', or more affordable homes for local families.
- A Housing Needs Assessment should be undertaken, irrespective of whether a NP seeks to allocate the Local Plan housing. A Housing Needs Assessment is an important evidence tool by which to make housing policy to control any development which might come forward in the future.

Design Code

- A NP can include a Design Code which would be applicable to all housing development in the parish area, regardless of how it is allocated / comes to fruition.
- Design Codes can sit alongside housing policy and site allocation, or be included independently.
- Design codes are used to inform development proposals to provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage and reflect local character and preferences.
- *“Design codes are important because they provide a framework for creating healthy, greener, environmentally responsive, sustainable, and distinctive places, with a consistent and high-quality standard of design. This can provide greater certainty for communities about the design of development and bring conversations about design to the start of the planning process, rather than the end. Creating more beautiful places requires a greener approach, with more energy efficient buildings, integrating with the natural environment and contributing positively to the net zero carbon target by 2050.”*

[National Model Design Code](#)



Image Caption: 10 Characteristics of Well Designed Places. (National Design Guide Extract).

- Paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that development that is not well designed should be refused permission, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents which use visual tools such as design codes and guides. Conversely, it states that significant weight will be given to development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents which use visual tools such as design guides and codes.
- **A NP can allocate housing and have a Design Code (as well as housing policy); or just have a Design Code (and housing policy) – or it opt to have none.**

Water Neutrality

- Unless development within the Sussex North Water Resource Zone can prove water neutrality it cannot (currently) be granted planning permission.
- Chichester's emerging Local Plan has devised a water neutrality mitigation strategy, which – subject to approval by the Planning Inspector at Examination - will be applicable to all housing allocated via the Local Plan.
- Housing which is not allocated within the Local Plan will not be able to take advantage of the mitigation strategy and will have to prove water neutrality independently.
- Any housing within a NP can only rely upon the water neutrality mitigation strategy if it aligns with the Local Plan.

Making a NP

- The Parish Council is responsible for neighbourhood planning and is the 'qualifying body'. However, the LPA (CDC) has a statutory role in the process – some of the decisions are made by the LPA (and must be made within a prescribed time-period) and they must provide advice or assistance to the Parish Council. The NP becomes part of the LPA's Development Plan and once passed at referendum must be adopted by the LPA.
- The process by which a NP is made includes various consultation periods, an Examination process by a Planning Inspector and a final community referendum on its adoption.
- The more advanced a NP becomes (before it is made) the more weight can be assigned to its emerging policies in the planning decision-making process.
- Various legislation, regulations and statutory instruments govern the making of a NP. Language such as "Reg 14 consultation" means the public consultation required by regulation 14 of The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 before the Parish Council can submit the NP proposal to the LPA.
- The process to develop a NP can take a few years; however, the pace can be determined by the Parish Council to a greater extent.

- The fact that the Parish had a well-developed draft NP which was stopped, enables it to 'fast-track' through some of the process – it will review and update those policies it wishes to keep – rather than starting completely from scratch. Other areas/policies will be developed from new.
- The Parish Council could not take any NP to “Reg 14 consultation” before the Local Plan has concluded its Examination process (anticipated end of 2023). This is because the NP must be strategically aligned with the Local Plan and the Local Plan policies might change as a result of the Examination process.
- Until the Local Plan has passed Examination, the number of houses to be allocated to Plaistow and Ifold Parish will not have been confirmed. Likewise, the water neutrality mitigation strategy will not have been approved.
- Regardless of whether the NP seeks to allocate a site for the Local Plan housing, it should understand how the water neutrality mitigation strategy impacts upon its emerging policies.
- However, to note, *if* the Local Plan fails examination / is significantly delayed, having a NP which is able to protect the community from speculative development seeking to take advantage of an out-of-date current Local Plan / less than 5-year housing land supply becomes an important factor. Made NP policy would be the most recent planning policy to be applied in the decision-making process.
- The Parish Council can appoint an advisory committee or sub-committee to support the preparation of a NP and can appoint local people (with voting rights) to the committee.
- Previously, the Parish Council had a Neighbourhood Steering Group (NPSG) made up of Councillors and MOP. However, this NPSG did not have any decision-making powers/voting rights. All decisions were made by the Parish Council.
- The Parish Council can instruct planning experts / consultants to help prepare the NP.
- Plaistow and Ifold PC has previously used Colin Smith Planning Ltd, who supported the Council / NPSG throughout its previous NP process.

- Technical support by specialist consultants/bodies is provided as part of the government grant support for ‘technical NPs’ – ones which allocate housing and/or have a Design Code. These specialists undertake specific bits of work/reports alongside an appointed expert e.g., Colin Smith Planning Ltd and any committee.
- Plaistow and Ifold PC is in an unusual position in that it previously began to develop a NP and got to Examination stage - before it was disrupted/stopped by Water Neutrality in 2022*(see below).
- A decision by the PC to begin the neighbourhood planning process again, would be a new NP. Although much of the base material is already in existence – it needs reviewing/updating rather than writing from scratch – **the NP would be considered new and once the material / evidence was back up to standard, the process would begin from Regulation 14 public consultation.**
- Any NP developed by the Parish Council now, would be a completely new Plan; it does not have to follow in the footsteps of the previous NP. Whereas the previous emerging NP allocated housing, any new NP does not have to do likewise. It can reuse/re-work/update some of the material within the old draft NP, but it can also prepare completely new material, if it wishes.
- Any major change(s) to a NP (throughout its development), requires it to return to the initial Regulation 14 public consultation stage.
- ** Water Neutrality meant that all the policies within the draft NP regarding housing would need to be removed in order for the NP to be legally compliant and pass Examination. This major change would have required a new ‘Reg 14 consultation stage’ and further delay in the process. As a result, the NP process was abandoned.*
- If the PC wishes to develop a NP, it is **STRONGLY ADVISED** that it uses the services of a planning consultant to undertake most of the works, rather than appoint a sub-committee to do the work.
- It is **STRONGLY ADVISED** that a consultant take the lead role in the process and carry out the majority of the work; as opposed to providing guidance, advice and review of the work carried out by the Parish Council itself (via a Steering Group).

- All decision-making can/will be made by the full Parish Council as required, and then undertaken by a consultant.
- This is to provide maximum development speed / accuracy in the review and development process and to remove any personal element to the process.
- Colin Smith Planning Ltd undertook much of the consultant work on the previous NP and therefore it is **STRONGLY ADVISED** that their services are retained as their historic knowledge and previous work will help maximise speed/efficiency and cost.

Cost

- To date, the government has opened an annual NP grant funding window.
- It usually runs from 1st April – 31st March, but delay in opening the window shortens the timeframe.
- In 2023/24, the window opened in July and runs until 31st March 2024.
- Future grant funding is never / not certain.
- The maximum grant funding (*see below) – to develop a NP from beginning to end - being 'made'/adopted - is not made available from the start.
- Parish Councils apply for grant funding in stages (usually based on work to be undertaken in a 3-month window, supported by quotes and up to a value of about £9,000 per application). Once this work is completed, a new application is made for the next grant award for the next stage(s) of the process.
- At the end of the annual funding window (31st March 2024), any underspend must be handed back; i.e., if the Parish Council 'draws down' £9,000 grant funding, but by 31st March 2024, £2,000 of this has not been spent, it must be returned to government.
- Provided the funding window reopens (1st April 2024+), the PC can apply for the remainder of the grant funding (again, in stages) i.e., the maximum grant less any expenditure incurred in previous years.
- This continues until the NP is made / the total grant funding amount is used up / the government stops making grant funding available (whichever happens first).

- *‘Technical Plans’, which allocate housing and/or have a Design Code, can apply for a maximum of £18,000 (£10,000 standard grant + £8,000 additional funding support). Non-technical Plans can apply for up to £10,000.
- ‘Technical Plans’ also have the benefit of having some of the required technical work/reports prepared by government funded bodies e.g., [AECOM](#) – an infrastructure consulting firm. This is on top of the £18,000. However, this technical work cannot be undertaken by the Council’s appointed consultant; it must be outsourced to AECOM and they are funded directly by the government.
- The Parish Council has experience working with Colin Smith Planning Ltd and AECOM in this working pattern.
- Provided the technical work has been applied for / started before 31st March 2024, it can be continue by AECOM once the funding window closes (31.03.2024). This is not the same for the monetary grant funding - after 31st March 2024, any underspend has to be returned and the Council must wait for the funding window to reopen before it can apply for the next ‘chunk’ of grant funding.
- [Locality](#) manages and approves the grant funding / technical support on behalf of government.
- Please refer to Colin Smith Planning Ltd’s draft fee estimate.
- The total maximum fee will likely be approximately £22, 050.
- This fee estimate would be reduced if the NP did not allocate housing / a site for the Local Plan housing and only had a Design Code and/or housing policy.
- Provided the Parish Council can undertake most of the works before 31st March 2024*(see below) - and therefore use up the majority / all of the known available grant funding – that will offset the cost.
- Based on the development of a Technical Plan (housing and/or Design Code) the cost to be met by the Council’s Precept would be approximately £4,050.

- *There is no reason to believe that the government will not open another funding window after 31st March 2024, and the funding terms will change. However, it must be noted that there could be delay in opening the window (as this year) and/or the terms of the funding could change.
- This would impact the speed of a NP development.
- Were the government to stop or reduce grant funding, any outstanding work on the NP (after 31st March 2024) would have to be privately funded by the Council's Precept.
- Both Locality and Colin Smith Planning Ltd have advised that it is possible to undertake the major works within the funding window (before 31st March 2024).
- NP reviews are also subject to new / separate grant funding - provided this is continued by the government in the future. Otherwise, the total cost of review/update will be borne by the Council.
- Future costs of the NP would be factored into the Council's business plan.
- To date, there is nothing to suggest that NPs are to be scrapped /undermined by this or future governments.

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