



Strategic Planning Committee.  
Calne Without Parish Council – July 2024

Considerations for the initial Derry Hill and Studley Strategic Plan.

The existing Calne Without Parish Council Strategic Plan needs significant modification to turn it into the initial Derry Hill and Studley Parish Council (DH&SPC) Strategic Plan ( “the Plan”). The following points should be considered when producing the first Plan.

1. The first version of the Plan must be produced by November 2024 to enable any funding proposals to be incorporated into the initial DH&SPC budget.
2. Out of necessity the first version of the Plan will be produced by the current council. It would therefore make sense for it to be reviewed and updated at an early stage in the life of DH&SPC.
3. It would make sense if as many current councillors from West, Sandy Lane and Pewsham Wards as possible were actively involved in the production of the Plan. It would be ideal if one of these councillors became the editor for the Plan.
4. The amount of CIL money available to DH&SPC will be very low. There will be no Sun Edison funding. The reserves will be at a much lower percentage of the running costs than today. It is highly likely that the precept will have to be raised to cover discretionary grants to be awarded. It is therefore important that expectations are set.

In the last two full years, 22/23 and 23/24, nearly £30,000 has been awarded as grants to the DH&SPC area (not including road projects). Approx £15,000 per annum – (compared to approx. £19,000 in total to rest of the parish). This doesn't include grants to the whole council area, such as Energy Event, free tree scheme, new noticeboards in Sandy Lane and Pewsham, Speed Indicator Devices).

5. It is highly likely that several of the proposed road safety improvement projects will not be “fully approved” before the current council ceases to exist. It is therefore highly likely that if they are to go ahead alternate sources of funding are found, most probably precept. The projects within the DH&SPC area most at risk, along with the estimate parish council contribution, are:
  - a. Studley Weight Restriction (£6,500)
  - b. Studley Speed Limit Implementation (£8,000)
  - c. Derry Hill and Studley traffic implementation (£25,430)
6. A target general reserve level must be set. CWPC currently has approx. 100% of its annual running cost in reserve. After the reserves have been distributed to the successor councils, it is estimated that DH&SPC will have a general reserve of approx. 58% . This is based on DH&SPC having 682 households out of a total of 1,437 in the whole parish = 47%. Assuming the general reserve stands at approx. £32,000, 47% of this is £15,000. The likely basic precept for DH&SPC will be approx. 80% of the current one (clerk costs, hall hire etc remain the same but there will be some reductions in expenditure, e.g. fewer bins to empty and noticeboards to maintain). This will mean that DH&SPC will have an estimated general reserve of £15,000 versus a spend of

approx. £26,000 leading to a 58% general reserve. If this is deemed to be insufficient, provision for increasing it must be made in the initial budget.

7. The solar farm at Forest Gate has promised a significant amount of money to invest in local projects for the lifetime of its existence. It is not currently clear when this money will become available or what the governance model will be for distributing it. Potentially this money could be used for grant funding in place of DH&SPC. From memory I think it is approx. £7,500 pa.
8. The use of alternative funding bodies should be investigated for individual projects (such as the Area Board, local sponsorship etc). For example, the Area Board may be asked for grant funding to support the popular annual Green Energy Event.
9. If the production of the new neighbourhood plan has not been completed by April 25 additional funding may be required in 25/26. I assume that CIL money could be transferred to successor councils to do this. The stated plan from the neighbourhood planning team is to do a rapid review of the new plan to allocate sites for development. If this were to happen DH&SPC would have to find funds to support this activity. DH&SPC would also at this point have to review whether continuing to have a joint plan with Calne Town Council makes sense when the joint boundary will be so small and will only be via fields.
10. Funding may not be available to support the current key strategic areas. Some may have to be dropped.

#### Key next steps:

1. Appoint an editor for the Plan.
2. Agree the value of grant funding for 25/26.
3. Agree the key strategic areas for the new council and how much funding to allocate to each.
4. Agree which road safety projects to progress and which to put on hold.
5. Agree the target level of general reserve that the DH&SPC should attain and if that is lower than the projected initial level after how many years should it be reached.
6. Calculate the level of precept required to accommodate points 3 to 5.
7. Check what legislation exists, if any, to limit the precept increase.
8. Agree the engagement required with the local community to agree the strategic priorities and projected precept level.
9. Produce an action plan. Points 1-8 must be completed by 1<sup>st</sup> October to enable the 25/26 draft budget to be produced by 1<sup>st</sup> November. Formal Strategic Planning Committee meetings need to be set-up at key times. It might be useful for an informal working group to be set-up to work on the draft plan inbetween formal reviews.

Cllr Doug Price