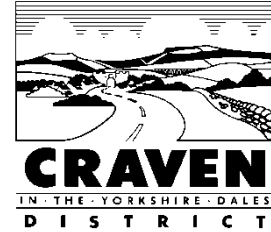


Policy Committee – 28th July 2015

DRAFT - CROSS HILLS VILLAGE CENTRE IMPROVEMENT PLAN



Report of the Director of Services

Ward(s) affected: Glusburn and Cross Hills

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report sets out some of the key challenges to make Cross Hills village centre a vibrant location for residents from across South Craven. The report explains the progress that has been made to date and the initial projects seeking resources.

2.0 Recommendations

Members are recommended to:

- 2.1 Allocate a sum of £100,000 from the Council's New Homes Bonus Infrastructure Reserve to support delivery of the actions in section 6.
- 2.2 Give delegated authority to the Economic Development Manager, in consultation with the Lead Member for Enterprising Craven and the Ward Members for Glusburn and Cross Hills to agree how the monies are assigned.
- 2.3 Grant permission to officers to seek and apply for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and other sources to develop and deliver the Cross Hills Heritage Building Scheme.
- 2.4 Establish a time limited grants panel to oversee the Cross Hills Heritage Building Scheme comprised of four Craven DC members including the ward representatives, a parish councillor and a local retailer.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 As at Minute POL.384/11-12, it was agreed that the Council's New Home Bonus receipts should be used for the provision of agreed infrastructure to support the communities and economy of Craven. The proposal was for the monies to be split between three priority actions – the Localism Reserve, the Infrastructure Reserve and the Empty Homes Reserve.

- 3.2 The purpose of the Infrastructure Reserve is to support the development of infrastructure through supporting job creation, revitalising towns and villages, rural broadband and the Leeds & Liverpool canal corridor. The Localism Reserve is aimed at supporting new local approaches to the delivery of Council priorities and for the purposes of this report it involves cleaner neighbourhoods.
- 3.3 The aim of the Revitalising Towns and Villages theme is “to enhance the role of the District’s towns and villages as economic hubs for goods and services by developing the commercial centre and improving the quality of the streetscape”. Within the Infrastructure Reserve Management Document, Cross Hills was specifically identified. An indicative allocation of £100,000 per project has been made within the forecast budget for the New Homes Bonus.
- 3.4 Cross Hills and the adjoining villages have a population of 8,402 making it the 11th largest settlement in North Yorkshire. When comparing the range of services and the quality of the public realm with similar sized second towns such as Pickering or Thirsk it is clear that Cross Hills is inadequately served.

Table 1 – Population comparisons with similar North Yorkshire towns

Settlements	Population 2011
Cross Hills (with adjoining villages*)	8,402
Pickering	6,832
Thirsk (with Sowerby)	9,262
Richmond	8,397
Filey	6,981

* includes the adjoining parishes of Cross Hills and Glusburn, Sutton in Craven, Kildwick and Farnhill.

- 3.5 The location of Cross Hills with its access to a wide range of services and employment opportunities along the Aire Valley and into East Lancashire is a significant strength but the proximity of Skipton (5 miles), Keighley (5 miles) and Colne (9 miles) also provides huge competition to some types of retailers and other service industries in Cross Hills. It is therefore attractive to commuters who require a different mix of services than Skipton but it will only be successful if the Main Street meets their needs.

4.0 Issues in Cross Hills

- 4.1 The key issues that have been identified as needing to be addressed are the result of walkabouts and discussions with local groups and the parish council. The issues are:

- Heavy traffic and poorly maintained and cluttered pavements that create a low quality and unsafe environment.

- The streetscape is in disrepair with uneven pavements, redundant and poor quality street furniture.
- Some of the shop fronts are of low quality and the attractive heritage features of the town need to be enhanced.
- Despite being as large as towns such as Pickering or Thirsk the South Craven villages do not have a comparable level of services or infrastructure.
- The public toilets in poor repair and are unattractive.
- There is limited appeal or a clear purpose to attract users to Cross Hills as a place to shop, eat or socialise.

4.2 It is generally accepted that the two major challenges and opportunities in Cross Hills are the level of traffic on the Main Street and also the reinstatement of the rail station. To address these issues would involve considerable time and resources and are therefore not the subject of this report but are part of on-going work with partners including NYCC and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and therefore is not considered as part of this report.

4.3 Also the public toilets are in a very poor state of repair and will need considerable resource to bring them to an acceptable standard. Therefore there will be discussions between Craven DC and the parish council on the future of the toilets.

5.0 Partnership and Project Progress

5.1 There have been a range of activities that have involved a joint approach between CDC, NYCC, the Parish Council and traders to start to both improve the appearance of the Main Street and also to reacquaint local communities with the Main Street. The key actions that have been achieved in Cross Hills are:

- South Craven Together was established in 2013
- Four events have been delivered by South Craven Together
- A walk-about looking at the problems of the Main Street involving the traders, Parish Council, Highways, Waste Management and Economic Development held in March 2014.
- Enforcement action related to five premises have commenced
- Highways carried out an assessment of the road surface and carried out some of the maintenance work required.
- Craven DC's Assets and Property Team and the Highways Department have removed some redundant signage and installed some new street signs.

6.0 Objectives and Proposed Projects

6.1 Working with retailers and the parish council the following objectives have been identified:

- Make Cross Hills Main Street area a more attractive place to live, eat, socialise and shop
- Attract more customers from surrounding villages

6.2 To address the objectives identified above the following actions have been identified.

a) Refurbishment of pavements – In order to lessen the effect of traffic on users of the Main Street it is important that we make the negotiation of the street’s pavements and crossings friendlier and safer to users in particular those with mobility issues. The pavements tend to be split parallel to the road with the half nearest the road being owned by NYCC and the half nearest the shops that are controlled by the retailers. This results in a fragmented approach to the paving as they are constructed and maintained to different standards. There are also poorly sited and redundant street furniture such as bollards, signage and litter bins obstructing the pavement. In addition the street lighting is unattractive and purely functional and the Main Street would benefit from a more sympathetic style of lighting. The key steps to achieve this project are:

Project	Estimated Cost	Milestones	Outcomes
Refurbishment of Pavements	£50,000	<p>Agree standards for NYCC adoption of pavements</p> <p>Draw up a streetscape scheme for the Main Street</p> <p>Discuss scheme and pavement adoption with shop owners</p> <p>Tender for construction work</p> <p>Commence construction work</p> <p>NYCC formally adopt the refurbished pavements where appropriate</p>	<p>Safer environment</p> <p>Improved access to the Main Street for people with restricted mobility</p> <p>More attractive streetscape including improved pavements and litter bins</p> <p>Increase the number of shoppers</p>

b) Review the Recycling Bring Site – The bring site in Hall Street, Cross Hills is large and untidy and in a very prominent position that impacts on the appearance of the Main Street. Several attempts have been made to find a solution to the appearance of the bring site but because of the scale of the facility it hasn't been possible to find a solution for that location. It is therefore recommended that we explore the impact of reducing, closing or relocating the bring site. There is now a comprehensive kerbside recycling service offered to all South Craven residents and it is clear that much of the recyclable material deposited is trade waste and should not be used for this purposes. This is an issue at many sites across the District so it is proposed that building on the Policy Committee decision in the Commercial Waste Recycling Report of the 10th July 2012 that all sites in South Craven are reviewed. If the site is removed or reduced in size then funding to tidy the area will come from the Refurbishment of Pavements project. The key steps to achieve this project are:

Project	Estimated Cost	Milestones	Outputs
Review of the Recycling Bring Site	If required to come from the Refurbishment of Pavements project.	Assess all bring sites across South Craven Develop a proposal for Cross Hills Consult with local communities Report the conclusions and recommendations to Policy Committee	More attractive streetscape

c) Cross Hills Heritage Building Scheme – The quality of the shop fronts and buildings on Cross Hills Main Street are variable with some being very attractive and well maintained and others that detract from the street with poor quality fronts that obscure the heritage features of the building. As part of the Local Plan, English Heritage is funding an appraisal of the heritage assets of Glusburn and Cross Hills and it is intended that we shall use this information to develop a Heritage Building Scheme to enhance the Main Street. Working with heritage groups in the community, local traders and the Parish Council it is proposed that we seek Heritage Lottery Funding and other sources to grant fund key buildings that if improved would improve the local environment. It is envisaged that the level of grant will be restricted to £10,000 or 50% of the

costs, whichever is lowest, but this will be reviewed in light of the English Heritage report. The key steps to achieve this project are:

Project	Estimated Cost	Milestones	Outcomes
Cross Hills Heritage Building Scheme	£50,000	<p>Complete English Heritage study</p> <p>Work with local communities and historians to understand the heritage of Cross Hills</p> <p>Work with the local communities to identify buildings that could be enhanced</p> <p>Approach building owners to discuss schemes</p> <p>Agree individual funding package for schemes</p>	<p>Increase community involvement with the Main Street</p> <p>Improve the appearance of key buildings</p> <p>Increase the number of shoppers</p> <p>Reduce retail vacancy rates</p>

7 Implications

7.1 Financial and Value for Money (vfm) Implications

A breakdown of the costs is in table 2 below showing the estimated costs for each of the key action within the report. The total cost is £100,000 to be funded from the Infrastructure Reserve. The budget shall be managed by the Economic Development Manager, in consultation with the Lead Member for Enterprising Craven and the Ward Members for Glusburn and Cross Hills allowing virement between the three projects.

Table 2 Project summary and estimated costs

Project	Description	Estimated Cost
Refurbishment of Pavements	Improvement of the streetscape furniture including new litter bins and resurfacing of pavements to adoption standards where appropriate	£40,000

Cross Hills Heritage Building Scheme	Grants for shop front improvements to bring designs into line with the design code.	£50,000
Recycling Bring Site	Review and improve the bring site including the option of relocating or closing the facility.	£10,000
Total		£100,000

Minute POL.384/11-12, it was resolved that 65% of the Council's New Homes Bonus receipts will be allocated to the Infrastructure Reserve and 15% to the Localism Reserve.

As the level of investment available to commit through the Infrastructure Reserve is directly related to income received from Government, it was agreed that decisions will only be presented to Members once sufficient funding has been confirmed.

The current uncommitted balance in respect of the Infrastructure Reserve is £851,511. The table below shows the income allocated to each reserve and potential commitments at 21st July 2015. If Members were minded to approve the recommendation at 2.1 above and the other recommendations on this Policy Committee the remaining balance of the Infrastructure Reserve will be £340,511.

Table 3 Current New Homes Bonus Reserve position

	Localism Reserve	Infrastructure Reserve
Current uncommitted reserves	£202,758	£851,511
Threshfield Quarry Public Art	£22,000	
Cross Hills Village Centre Plan		£100,000
ESIF Business Support	£46,123	
Leeds Liverpool Canal		£400,000
Town Hall Feasibility Study	£20,000	
Remaining Balance	£114,635	£351,511

In line with the aim to improve the economic vitality of the District's market towns and villages within the Council Plan future requests will be made for funding from the Infrastructure Reserve to support improvements in Bentham

and Settle. These requests will be presented to Policy Committee in due course.

7.2 Legal Implications

In order to deliver the Heritage Building Scheme it is proposed to establish a time limited grants panel that will be comprised of four Craven DC members including the ward representatives, a parish councillor and a local retailer. The offer of a grant shall be via the standard capital grant offer letter and will be monitored by the Economic Development Team.

The adoption of the refurbished pavements by NYCC Highway Department will be dependent on meeting their specific criteria. If it is not appropriate to adopt the pavements then the ownership and liability shall remain with the frontager.

7.3 Contribution to Corporate Priorities –

The proposals in this report directly contribute to the delivery of the Council Plan (2015 – 2018) through the Enterprising Craven priority, in particular the action to improve the economic vitality of the District's market towns and villages by implementing a range of initiatives to make them more attractive as places to live, work, visit and do business.

7.4 Risk Management

There are no significant risks to the Council as a result of approving the recommendations in this report.

7.5 Equality Impact Assessment -

The Council's Equality Impact Assessment Procedure **has not been** followed. Therefore neither an Initial Screening or an Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken on the proposed policy, strategy, procedure or function to identify whether it has/does not have the potential to cause negative impact or discriminate against different groups in the community based on •age • disability •gender • race/ethnicity • religion or religious belief (faith) •sexual orientation, or • rural isolation.

8.0 Consultations with Others

Legal Team
Finance Team
Asset and Property Management

9.0 Access to Information : Background Documents –

None

10.0 Author of the Report –

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Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.

11.0 Appendices

None