



Extraordinary Board Meeting to discuss the 2020 Distington Big Local Plan
29 January 2020 at 11.30 am
Distington Community Centre

Present: Rhoda Robinson (Chair), Norma Pritt(NP), Annette Whitehead(AW), Alison Boyd(AB), Josephine Greggain(JG), Pete Duncan(PD), Ingrid Morris(IM), Julia Powley(JP), Karen Hodgson(KH), Sue Hunter(SH), Elaine Ismay(EI), Paula Speight(PS), Joy Jones(JJ) and Lindsay Bodman(LB) Minutes.

Apologies: Jean Skelly

Not Present : Jason Scott, Antoni Logan

DBL Plan

IM explained that the current Distington Big Local (DBL) plan/budget ceases at the end of March 2020. DBL has to apply to Local Trust to draw down more funding, we need to produce an action plan, vision and legacy statements for Local Trust.

IM had listed the legacy projects in a report to the Board prior to the meeting (shaded in grey), no one had anything else to add.

PD informed the meeting that Local Trust now expect Plans differently and need to know how DBL intend to: spend up their funds, create a legacy, and whether they will continue in some form or wind up the work. Big Locals can operate for 6 more years depending on what the funding is spent on/costs of projects. 27 areas have less than £100,000 left and will wind up within a year.

We have roughly £350,000 of funding left to draw down– and can realistically keep going for another 3 years without delivering any major new projects. The Land Development will take about that length of time to complete (provided we get planning permission for the scheme). We are in the process of partnering with a Registered Provider to run the development once it has been built and are hoping to get an annual round rent from them. In the long term it was hoped that the village maintenance role would become self funding and be able to continue once DBL funding has come to an end, but it costs much more to hire the staff and pay for equipment, than could be offset by any income it generates through work that we subsidise by paying the staff wages and other costs. This minimal income is currently not profit as it is ploughed straight back into community projects. JJ asked would the council take over? RR – no. NP – the mower breaking may cost £12000 to replace.

If the mower did break it would force our hand in regards to deciding whether to continue with the village maintenance.

Village Maintenance

It was agreed to continue the Village Maintenance project including the gardening and handy man schemes.

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

Clinics are held in Whitehaven and Workington. Lots of good information has been distributed over the years of the outreach session in Distington. One of the aims of Big Local is to up-skill people – residents can go to Whitehaven or Workington now they know what service is available. It is believed that CAB were present in the village at the right time – especially with Universal Credit coming in that affected many.

It was asked how much did CAB support Fareshare? Joint support with DBL, CAB and Credit Union. Catrina does still support the group as do DBL staff but they require less support as the project goes on.

Whilst acknowledging what a good service CAB has delivered for us and what a positive effect it has had for Distington, it was decided to no longer fund the 3 hour weekly CAB sessions.

It was agreed to cut CAB funding.

DCYP

To date we have funded DCYP in the region of £82,000. Over the last few years we have funded them £16,000 per year. They are requesting the same next year. Does it have an impact if plug is pulled on DCYP funding from DBL? Yes, was the general consensus. Do we still fund DCYP? – just a bit less so other funders would put more cash in. It was decided to reduce the funding gradually to DCYP to aid help them become more independent and encourage funding from other sources. Exact amounts to be decided. It was thought that perhaps £12,000, £10,000 and £8,000 (or £6,000) over the next 3 years. The amounts will be agreed at the next Board Meeting.

It was agreed to reduce funding over the remaining 3 years.

New Company Structure

In order to best accommodate to the land development we need to convert DBL Ltd from a Company Limited by Guarantee to a Charitable Community Benefit Society (CBS). The fact that we get an 'income' from Village Maintenance gardening work caused a stumbling block when we applied to the Charity Commission. SH – what if this becomes a problem again when apply for Charitable CBS?

What if residents gave a donation for the maintenance work? IM to raise this with Trowers & Hamlin who are carrying out the work for us.

Conflict of Interests

IM and LB left the room whilst the Board discussed staffing issues.

Ingrid works 30 hours per week. Vic starts back on 18 Feb and has reduced her hours to 18, Lindsay will stay on at 15 hours per week. This means office staff hours will increase from 52 to 63 per week.

It was agreed to review staffing in 12 months time.

Community Events

It would be great to celebrate the success of DBL near the end of the programme (March 2023) with a community fun day. Everyone agreed this would be a good idea. We will continue with the annual Christmas event and Christmas shopping trip for the next 3 years.

Community Chest & Transport Fund

It was decided to run these for another 3 years.

Play Park – Hinnings Road

KH said that the County Council has agreed to change ownership of the land on Hinnings Road (near the Doctors') to Distington Parish Council. This is great news after years of trying to acquire it for a play park. RR would like money to be put aside to for this as residents raised have hoped for a play park here since DBL first started. There is no play park on that side of the village and the Board agreed it would be a great provision for the children. Match funding from other sources will need to be found. Any ground rent we get from the land development could be used to maintain the play park. This seems fitting since the land development is for over 55's and the play park would benefit younger members of Distington. (This may take years to sort out). A sub group could be formed perhaps with the newer Board members with Vic and Lindsay supporting them to try and get a play park built. It could however take several years for the land to be transferred over to DPC. A sum of £50,000 was mentioned for the project. This will need to be agreed at the next Board Meeting.

General

Distington village will need to raise more money in the future when DBL has ceased. Currently we have all become a little complacent as we know DBL is there.

When our Funding Comes to an End

It was decided that any remaining assets after DBL finishes should probably passed to the Parish Council.

Any Other Business

Lorraine at CCC said there is money left in the Copeland pot for Land Development which we can apply for. IM to put in an application for this.

Draft Minutes of this meeting to be circulated for all to agree. (Action: Complete)

IM & JP will meet on 18th February 2020 to draw up a draft spend report for the remaining 3 years. This will then be discussed for agreement at the next Board Meeting on 19th February 2020.

Next Land Group meeting at 1 pm Tuesday 4 February 2020 at NP's home to go through latest changes of the scheme with HLP