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Your ref  
Our ref SD/SA  
Date 7 September 2016

To: All Parish Councils

Dear Town/Parish Clerk

Funding for Parishes and Communities - Urgent Attention

As you will be aware, the Borough Council has operated a very popular and successful Parish and Community Initiative Fund for some years now, with around £1 million being awarded to 223 local projects in the last eleven years.

The Council has now (6 September) agreed to increase the maximum annual allocation to each Parish from the current £10,000 to £12,000, with the maximum available per project having the same increase. The Fund will now also contribute a maximum of 60% to the cost of the projects (subject to the above financial maximum) - a rise from 50%. Formal invitations for bids against the fund will be issued shortly and applications should be made in the usual way.

An additional source of funding is also now available for Parishes and communities - the Developing Communities Fund. This fund aims to support larger projects in areas where there is (or is anticipated to be) considerable population and/or employment growth. It can support facilities which Section 106 Developer contributions cannot support because of either financial or legislative limits. Parishes and their communities will be expected to contribute at least 25% of the total project cost, in accordance with the formula on the attached sheet.

In order to be considered for support from the Developing Communities Fund, you are invited to submit outline bids of a potential project to me by 9 December 2016, so that evaluations can take place as part of the Council's budget-setting for 2017/18. 'Joint' bids with partner Parishes will be considered for projects which might contribute to developments across a wider area than a single Parish or community.

The two Funds are available for all Town and Parish Councils and their communities and bids can be submitted against both Funds, but for different projects, depending on their size.

In submitting an outline bid for the Developing Communities Fund, you should address the following questions:

ctd ...

- In order to support increased development in your area (planned, in progress or anticipated), what facility/facilities would be required to provide necessary infrastructure beyond that available under Section 106 arrangements?
- What capital funding would the Parish/Community be able to contribute on a minimum of 25% basis with the Borough Council, as determined by the agreed Funding formula?
- Over what period would you envisage this funding being necessary? (The expectation would be that any funding provided would be expended within three years).

To support any bids, you are encouraged to commence work on Neighbourhood Development Plans, to which the Borough Council could provide Officer support, as this will add weight to your bid, as well as providing greater local certainty on planning matters for the future.

I look forward to your submissions. If you need anything further in the meantime, do get in touch.

All these positive initiatives will be put on the agenda for the next meeting of the Parish Forum on 29 September, which I hope you are able to attend.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Atkinson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

Steve Atkinson  
Chief Executive

cc: Cllr Kevin Morrell  
Cllr Chris Ladkin  
Edwina Grant

## **A Developing Communities Fund (DCF)**

1. The DCF will be available to all Parishes and their Communities.
2. For any such scheme to be effective, it should;
  - be based on the Parish and Community Initiative Fund principles
  - be affordable (see 5 below)
  - require a financial contribution from the Parish Council/community group of a minimum of 25% of the total cost of the project; the actual level being calculated by reference to the formula in 3 (below). The contribution can be found from all available/legitimate funding sources.
  - be subject to a set of criteria which cover value for money and 'meeting strategic local need'
  - use a sound information/evidence base for the latter criteria, such as could be provided by Neighbourhood Development Plans.
3. The formula for determining the Parish/Community contribution will be based on an 'average' level of 35%, but be varied according the level of actual annual precept, as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Funding percentage required (\%)} \times \text{Average Band D Precept}^*}{\text{Actual Band D Precept}^*}$$

\* These figures are subject to change each year.

There will be a minimum contribution from the Parish Council/Community of 25% of the total project cost, irrespective of the Precept levels.

4. The preparation and use of Neighbourhood Development Plans is strongly encouraged on all the Parishes, as it will not only provide a sound evidence base for bids to the DCF, but also a robust evidence base to respond to speculative development applications in the future. The Borough Council can provide support via the establishment of a Parish Plans Support Officer, whose role will cover 'signposting', general advice and project guidance/consultancy support.
5. In addition it should be made clear to that joint bids between Parishes and their communities will be considered, it if can be shown that they have broad support, applicability beyond a single area and have a clear link to any Parish Plans. It should be made clear also that feasibility studies can be considered for funding.

**Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council**  
**6 September 2016**