
TITLE: The Future of Grant Funding for Small Villages

Committee: Community & Environment Committee

Date: Thursday 8th May 2014.

Author: Julie Cornwell, Partnerships Officer.

[N284]

1.0 ISSUE

1.1 To note the current levels of the 'Small Villages' S106 funds and the implications for this moving forwards and to one of the 2 options proposed.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

2.1 To consider the 2 options presented at 6.1 – 'Cease offering capital grants' and 6.2 – 'Establish a new capital grant fund' for the future delivery of capital grant funding for parishes with little or no S106 or CIL receipts and to recommend the preferred course of action to the Chairman's Group.

2.2 If the option at 6.2 is selected (i.e. to set up a new Capital Grant Fund from 2015-16), to task the Corporate Governance & Finance Committee with identifying suitable funds.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 Since 1st April 2008 the Council has spent the majority of its S106 allocations via a grant scheme, open to parish councils and other community based organisations that operate on a not-for-profit basis in East Cambridgeshire. There are two grant schemes: the 'Community Facilities Section 106 Grant', for parishes with their own allocation of S106 funding and the 'Small Villages Grant' for parishes without their own allocation of S106 monies, which historically has tended to be the smaller parishes in the District. 'Small Village' applicants can bid for a maximum of £10,000 per application.

3.2 No further monies will be added to either of these grant pots for two reasons:

- 1) As of February 2011 Section 106 agreements were worded to more closely align with the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) process that was due imminently. Income linked to these agreements must be spent in the Parish/settlement detailed within the agreement. There is no grant application process for allocating the money: ECDC decides what the monies will be spent on following dialogue with appropriate interested parties.
- 2) CIL came into force on 1st February 2013, with Parish/Town Council's receiving 'a meaningful proportion' of the CIL income for their area from that point onwards. The decision on how to spend the remaining balance of CIL income sits with the District Council and is being allocated to key strategic projects for the foreseeable future.

4.0 CURRENT POSITION OF 'SMALL VILLAGES' S106 ALLOCATION

- 4.1 In 2012-13 there were 4 successful applications for small villages grant funding with a total award value of £30,760. In 2011-12 5 applications were approved with a value of £39,590.25. In 2013-14, 7 'Small Village' applications were approved with a total award of £56,555.
- 4.2 As of 3rd April 2014, the balance of funding in the 'Small Villages' pot was £35,635.08¹. £27,085.92 of the small villages funding must be spent on projects providing community and social infrastructure, with the remaining £9,836.17 to be spent on public open space projects.
- 4.3 The average spend from the Small Villages Grant over the past 3 years has been £40,635.08. Based on this average it is anticipated that the Small Villages Grant Fund will run out no later than the end of the 2014-15 financial year.
- 4.4 Many Parishes have been in receipt of Small Villages Funding since 2011: namely Little Thetford, Stetchworth, Kennett, Aldreth, Fordham, Chippenham, Dullingham, Reach, Brinkley, Witcham, Stretham and Woodditton. At the point of receiving a Small Villages Grant, none of these Parishes had their own S106 allocation.

5.0 FUTURE NEED FOR GRANT FUNDING

- 5.1 The Community Services Team recently assessed the need for additional and/or improved play facilities. The results of this 'Play Audit' demonstrate that there are significant deficits in play provision in many parishes and an on-going funding requirement to ensure that young people are encouraged to lead an active lifestyle.
- 5.2 In 2013-14 Cambridgeshire ACRE was commissioned by ECDC to produce an assessment of community facilities across East Cambridgeshire. The results of this work show that at least 59% village halls will require significant funding over the coming years, which can be grouped into three themes: accessibility (e.g. hard surfacing gravel car parks to allow for wheel chair access; sustainability (e.g. the installation of green energy sources to reduce energy bills) and large capital replacement projects (e.g. the roof/ the floor).
- 5.3 Both 'play provision' and 'community facility' improvements could eventually be met in part by CIL receipts for those parishes where there is significant development. However, for those parishes without such growth there is likely to be a large funding shortfall. It is likely that external grant funds such as Amey Cespa and the Lottery will still be available, however, many such grants require an element of match funding.
- 5.4 Appendix A illustrates which parishes are projected to be in receipt of CIL. The figures are based on applications that have been determined by the planning authority that are liable for CIL. Should the planning permissions be implemented (which could be anytime in the next three years) this is the level of CIL the Council

¹ As of 3rd April 2014 the balance of funding in the Parish allocations totals £931,972.12

may receive. The Council cannot guarantee this money coming forward as the projections rely on those permissions being implemented.

5.5 The following Parishes had a receipt in October 2013:

Sutton Parish Council- £5,140.80
Coveney Parish Council- £1,196.10

The following Parish's will have a receipt in April 2014:

Chippenham Parish Council- £1,552.13
Wicken Parish Council- £1,010.48
Swaffham Bulbeck Parish Council- £482.26
Haddenham Parish Council- £778.55

6.0 OPTIONS

6.1 Cease offering capital grants

The Council has no statutory obligation to provide a capital grant for communities. The Council could choose to allow the S106 'Small Villages' grant fund to run out and not replace it with an alternative fund.

6.2 Establish a new capital grant fund

The Council could allocate £45,000 capital per year from 2015-16 to provide a 'Community Capital Grant Fund' for communities in East Cambridgeshire to access (final criterion and guidelines to be agreed by the appropriate Committee in due course). The main principles and criteria are proposed as follows:

- The aim of the East Cambridgeshire Community Capital Grant Fund would be focused on developing and improving village halls, community centres, sport and leisure centres, play facilities and public open spaces.
- The scheme would be open to all community based organisations that operate on a not-for-profit basis in East Cambridgeshire.
- Awards of up to a maximum of £10,000 would be available. A minimum of 10% match funding must be provided by the applicant organisation or other grant provider.
- Parishes would only eligible to apply for this grant which either have no Section 106 (S106) allocation or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts or which do not have sufficient CIL or S106 to meet the full costs of a project.

6.3 Parishes with populations over 3,000 are not able to apply for Small Villages Funding. If this was applied to a future capital grant fund, the Parishes excluded would be: Littleport, Soham, Ely, Sutton, Haddenham, Burwell and Newmarket.

7.0 ARGUMENTS/CONCLUSIONS

7.1 There is clear evidence of need for grant funding to support the voluntary and community sector to provide valuable community and play facilities in our District. The social and health benefits of such provision are well documented and therefore

the District Council should give consideration to providing a modest grant fund, particularly as this can help communities to leverage in other grant funds.

- 7.2 The grant fund would also help the District Council to achieve its own objectives around health, reducing rural isolation and improving the quality of life in East Cambridgeshire.

8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 Capital funding of £45,000 per annum would be required to meet the current level of demand for community facility/open space grants.

- 8.2 An Equality Impact Assessment (INRA) has been completed in relation to Option 1 - ceasing grant funding when the S106 small villages funds run out.

9.0 APPENDICES

- 9.1 Appendix A – Projected CIL receipts.
Appendix B – Full INRA

<u>Background Documents</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact Officer</u>
S106 Tracking data	FF115	Julie Cornwell Partnerships Officer (01353) 616352 E-mail: Julie.cornwell@eastcambes.gov.uk

Appendix A - Projected CIL allocations

Town/Village	Total	Total after SBR*
Ashley	0.00	0.00
Bottisham	6,404.40	4,050.00
Brinkley	0.00	0.00
Burrough Green	0.00	0.00
Burwell	11,172.60	6,628.50
Cheveley	3,618.00	3,618.00
Chippenham	2,646.00	0.00
Coveney	2,808.00	0.00
Dullingham	4,083.75	0.00
Ely	367,398.00	362,148.00
Fordham	9,001.80	6,750.00
Haddenham	21,436.11	14,686.11
Isleham	5,719.95	5,719.95
Kennett	0.00	0.00
Kirtling	1,350.00	0.00
Little Downham	1,660.50	0.00
Little Thetford	0.00	0.00
Littleport	46,762.80	44,584.80
Lode	0.00	0.00
Mepal	8,208.00	8,208.00
Newmarket	12,150.00	9,450.00
Prickwillow	2,700.00	2,700.00
Pymoor	1,350.00	0.00
Queen Adelaide	1,552.50	0.00
Reach	2,700.00	0.00
Snailwell	0.00	0.00
Soham	125,971.56	118,956.00
Stetchworth	4,320.00	2,700.00
Stretham	19,382.77	13,918.37
Sutton	4,050.00	0.00
Stuntney	692.55	0.00
Swaffham Bulbeck	7,101.00	2,160.00
Swaffham Prior	0.00	0.00
Wardy Hill	2,457.00	2,457.00
Wentworth	4,185.00	0.00
Westley Waterless	6,393.60	6,393.60
Wicken	4,007.48	1,350.00
Wilburton	4,968.00	4,968.00
Witcham	20,612.75	19,372.50
Witchford	6,466.50	3,766.50
Woodditton	0.00	0.00

* The shaded column sets out the more likely figures if Self-Build Relief is applied for

Impact and Needs/Requirements Assessment (INRA)

Name of Policy:	Potential cessation of Small Village Grant Funding
Lead Officer (responsible for assessment):	Julie Cornwell, Partnerships Officer
Department:	Community Services
Others Involved in the Assessment (i.e. peer review, external challenge):	-
Date INRA Completed:	03/04/14

'Policy' needs to be understood broadly to include all Council policies, strategies, services, functions, activities and decisions.

(a) **What is the policy trying to achieve?** i.e. What is the aim/purpose of the policy? Is it affected by external drivers for change? What outcomes do we want to achieve from the policy? How will the policy be put into practice?

The average spend from the Small Villages Grant over the past 3 years has been £40,635.08. Based on this average it is anticipated that the Small Villages Grant Fund will run out no later than the end of the 2014-15 financial year.

The Council has no statutory obligation to provide a capital grant. The Council could choose to allow the S106 'Small Villages' grant fund to run out and not replace it with an alternative fund.

(b) **Who are its main beneficiaries?** i.e. who will be affected by the policy?

Since 2011 the main beneficiaries of Small villages grant funding have been residents living in the Parishes of: Little Thetford, Stetchworth, Kennett, Aldreth, Fordham, Chippenham, Dullingham, Reach, Brinkley, Witcham, Stretham and Woodditton.

If the Council decides not to replace the S106 Small Village Grant with a new Capital grant scheme, every small village (i.e. those with a population of less than 3,000) will be affected as they will have reduced ability to secure funding to keep their community, play and sports facilities in good running order.

(c) **Is the INRA informed by any information or background data (quantitative or qualitative)?** i.e. consultations, complaints, applications received, allocations/take-up, satisfaction rates, performance indicators, access audits, census data, benchmarking, workforce profile etc.

The assessment is informed by the level of spending from the Small village Grant since 2011 and knowledge around other funding sources available to Parish Councils and organisations responsible for running community facilities.

(d) Does this policy have the potential to cause an impact (positive, negative or neutral) on different groups in the community, on the grounds of (please tick all that apply):

Ethnicity
Gender
Disability

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Age
Religion and Belief
Sexual Orientation

X
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain any impact identified (positive, negative or neutral): i.e. What do you already know about equality impact or need? Is there any evidence that there is a higher or lower take-up by particular groups? Have there been any demographic changes or trends locally? Are there any barriers to accessing the policy or service?

Both 'play provision' and 'community facility' improvements could eventually be met in part by CIL receipts for those parishes where there is significant development. However, for those parishes without such growth there is likely to be a large funding shortfall. It is likely that external grant funds such as Amey Cespa and the Lottery will still be available, however, many such grants require an element of match funding, which the Small Villages pot has historically provided.

Unsafe or unkempt play areas will have an impact on young people.

Unsafe and poor quality sports and community facility provision impacts on all users within a community.

The lack of frequent public transport services also means that those without access to a car will not be able to use facilities in other parishes should their own facilities close.

(e) Does the policy have a differential impact on different groups?

YES/NO/Not Applicable

(f) Is the impact *adverse* (i.e. less favourable) on one or more groups?

YES/NO/Not Applicable

(g) Does it have the potential to disadvantage or discriminate unfairly against any of the groups in a way that is unlawful?

YES/NO/Not Applicable

(h) What additional information is needed to provide a clear picture of how the activity is impacting on different communities and how will you collect this information, i.e. expert groups, further research, consultation* etc? Where there are major gaps in information that cannot be addressed immediately, these should be highlighted in your recommendations and objectives at the end of the INRA.

No additional information is needed

* The Consultation Register is available to assist staff in consulting with the Council's stakeholders. If you are consulting on a new or revised policy contact the Principal HR Officer.

(i) Do you envisage any problems with these methods of information collection? i.e. not accessible to all, timescale not long enough to obtain all of the necessary information, translation facilities not available, insufficient resources etc.

N/A

(j) If it has been possible to collect this additional information, summarise the findings of your research and/or consultation (please use a separate sheet if necessary).

N/A

(k) What are the risks associated with the policy in relation to differential impact and unmet needs/requirements? i.e. reputation, financial, breach of legislation, service exclusion, lack of resources, lack of cooperation, insufficient budget etc.

The Council has no statutory obligation to provide a capital grant. The Council could choose to allow the S106 'Small Villages' grant fund to run out and not replace it with an alternative fund. There would be reputational damage to the Council if this course of action was taken.

The District Council uses community facilities for its own purposes (such as elections and holding events) and so there is a risk that the Council would have to seek or provide alternative venues such as mobile facilities for elections in the long term.

(l) Use the information gathered in the earlier stages of your INRA to make a judgement on whether there is the potential for the policy to result in unlawful discrimination or a less favourable impact on any group in the community, and what changes (if any) need to be made to the policy.

Option 1:	No major changes, the evidence shows no potential for discrimination.	
Option 2:	Adjust the policy to remove barriers or to better promote equality.	
Option 3:	Continue the policy despite potential for adverse impact or missed opportunity to promote equality.	
Option 4:	Stop and remove the policy – if the policy shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination it must be stopped and removed or changed.	x

(m) Where you have identified the potential for adverse impact, what action can be taken to remove or mitigate against the potential for the policy to unlawfully discriminate or impact less favourably on one or more communities in a way that cannot be justified? Include key activities that are likely to have the greatest impact (max. 6). Identified actions should be specified in detail for the first year but there may be further longer term actions which need to be considered. To ensure that your actions are more than just a list of good intentions, include for each: the person responsible for its completion, a timescale for completion, any cost implications and how these will be addressed. It is essential that you incorporate these actions into your service plans.

For a relatively small amount of money (£45,000 per annum), the District Council could continue to support parish councils and community groups to secure the future of community facilities, play and sports provision in the District, thus negating any reputational damage.

This fund would provide significant added value to East Cambridgeshire as it enables grant funding to be secured from other sources.

This completed INRA will need to be countersigned by your Head of Service. **Please forward completed and signed forms to Nicole Pema, Principal HR Officer.**

All completed INRAs will need to be scrutinised and verified by the Council’s Equal Opportunities Working Group (EOWG) and published on the Council’s Intranet to demonstrate to local people that the Council is actively engaged in tackling potential discrimination and improving its practices in relation to equalities. Please be aware that you will be asked to attend a half-an-hour session to summarise the findings of the INRA to the EOWG Verification panel.

Signatures:

Completing Officer: _____ **Date:** _____

Head of Service: _____ **Date:** _____