

## **PARISH PARTNERSHIP FUND**

### **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report reviews the success of the Parish Partnership Funding initiative established in 2001/2002.

### **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 As part of the 2001/2002 budget making process, Council decided to establish a Parish Partnership Fund of £20,000 from the capital programme, with further allocations of £20,000 in the capital programme for 2002/2003 and 2003/2004. The fund was established to aid the smaller parishes in particular and was focussed around issues relating to Crime and Disorder and especially matters relating to younger people.
- 2.2 Council agreed that the effectiveness of the Partnership Fund should be reviewed after its first year of operation, hence this report.

### **3 DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS**

#### Projects Funded

- 3.1 As a result of the fund being established, 5 bids were received from the Parish/Town Councils within the District. Those from Barling, Foulness, Ashingdon and Hullbridge were approved, whilst that from Rayleigh Town Council was refused as it was considered, given the size and resources available to that Council, it could fund the project itself. The bid submission from Hullbridge relating to additional CCTV provision was actually funded from specific grant funding given by the Home Office under the 'Communities Against Drugs' Initiative. Thus, in effect, only three projects were specifically approved under this initiative as follows:-

<u>Parish</u>	<u>Total Cost of Project</u>	<u>Description of Project</u>	<u>Grant Given</u>
Barling	£10,000	New play equipment	£5,000
Foulness	£7,086	Play area improvements	£3,543
Ashingdon	£14,234	Skateboard Park	£7,117

- 3.2 Of the three projects, two have been/are being implemented at the time of writing this report. The Ashingdon project, relating to the provision of a skateboard ramp, has encountered some local objection as to its siting and the Parish Council met earlier this month and decided not to proceed. Nonetheless, they wished to convey their thanks to the District Council for the funding support offered.
- 3.3 At its meeting in February, Council agreed that the residual of monies left over from the £20,000 in 2001/2002 should provide grant funding for Hockley Parish Council as part of the transfer of the Laburnum Grove Play space and refurbishment of that area (approximately £4,000)

Assessment of Success

- 3.4 The Parish Partnership Fund has undoubtedly helped some Parish Councils fund projects which would not otherwise have taken place. The successful Councils have advised that, without the grant being offered by the District Council, their project would not have progressed at all. The presence of District Council grant monies has also helped attract other sources of grant funding. In this sense, therefore, the initiative has been both welcome and successful.
- 3.5 It is apparent however, that the fund was not oversubscribed with bid submissions. It may be that the themes chosen or the criteria laid down limited the number of submissions, although it is interesting that no Parish has commented that it did have a project which it wished to submit, but was discouraged from doing so on account of the themes chosen/criteria laid down by the District Council.
- 3.6 On this basis therefore, there seems little value in simply repeating the 2001/2002 exercise. The options available for the District Council would appear as follows:
- Retain the Fund but change the theme and/or criteria for bid submissions, e.g. environmental enhancements, street furniture, IT links.
  - Return the £20,000 annual allocation to the capital programme for reconsideration as part of the 2003/2004 budget debate.
  - Retain the Fund to assist Parishes, but use it more specifically in relation to the progression of District Council initiatives, e.g. transference of play areas/local open spaces to the Parishes (similar to the decision taken earlier this year to use the residue of the 2001/2002 allocation to facilitate the transference of Laburnum

Grove to Hockley Parish), work in connection with the District Council's Community Strategy (Parish studies/surveys) etc.

- 3.7 On the basis of this Committee's deliberations, a recommendation can be made to full Council on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2002.

#### **4 RECOMMENDATION**

- 4.1 That the Committee determines how it considers the Council should proceed in connection with the Parish Partnership Initiative Fund and to recommend to full Council accordingly. (CEX)

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#### **Background Papers:**

Letter from Foulness Parish Council – 1<sup>st</sup> July 2002

Letters from Ashingdon Parish Council – 28<sup>th</sup> June 2002 and 4<sup>th</sup> July 2002

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