

NOT CONFIDENTIAL – For public release

Community & Environment Committee

29 June 2022

Report of the Director of Resources

## **PARISH COUNCIL REIMBURSABLE EXPENDITURE SCHEME**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report considers an application from Calver Parish Council for funding in respect of the cost of the maintenance of a newly acquired village green.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the application from Calver Parish Council for funding maintenance of the village green be refused.

### **WARDS AFFECTED**

Calver

### **STRATEGIC LINK**

The village green belongs to Calver Parish Council but would contribute towards Keeping the Derbyshire Dales Green and improving the health and wellbeing of people who use it.

### **1 REPORT**

- 1.1 The Council has a parish council reimbursable expenditure scheme. The intention of the scheme is to support parish councils financially where they maintain burial grounds and playing fields.
- 1.2 On 5<sup>th</sup> June 2008, the Community and Environment Committee considered a report of the former Community and Environment Overview Committee following a Scrutiny Key Challenge of Parish Council Reimbursable Expenditure. The Committee resolved:
- 1.3 “That the Council does not automatically assume the maintenance costs for any new facilities, i.e. playing fields, with any such request to be considered by the appropriate Policy Committee of the Council”.
- 1.4 An application has been received from Calver Parish Council for the Council to provided additional funding of approximately £1,300 (75% of £1700) in 2022/23 in respect of the additional cost of maintaining their new village green. A copy of the request is including at Appendix 1. The element for which the Parish Council has applied for funding is 75% of the cost of grass cutting contracts.

1.5 In considering the application, the following points should be borne in mind:

- In order to contribute towards meeting the corporate savings target, budgets for reimbursable expenditure have been cash limited to the amounts set in 2012/13. It could be considered unfair if a new scheme is approved for one particular Parish Council. Furthermore, this could create a precedent for other parish councils to submit requests for increased financial support. Officers have been unable to identify any new schemes being added since the review in 2008.
- The Council has approved a Corporate Savings Target to identify efficiency savings and/or additional income of £250,000 a year by 2023/24" Therefore, any increase in the budget for reimbursable expenditure would have to be met by a reduction in the Council's budgets elsewhere.
- Unlike the district council, Calver Parish Council is not subject to Council Tax capping, and could meet any increased costs through an increase in their precept request. For 2022/23 the Parish Council levied a precept of £8,500, equivalent to a Band D Council Tax of £23.39 per household. This compares to the average Parish Council Band D Council Tax of £61.97 in 2022/23. If the precept had been increased by £1,300, the resulting Band D Council Tax would have been £26.97.

1.8 Taking into account the above issues, it is proposed that the application should be refused.

## 2 RISK ASSESSMENT

### Legal

2.1 This report is focused on a Parish Council's request for additional funds to cover expenditure in the current year. The report in itself does not raise any specific Legal issues as the decision is for the District Council to make as opposed to an obligation. Therefore the Legal risk at this time has been assessed as Low.

### Financial

2.2 There is no budgetary provision for further commitments under the parish council reimbursable expenditure scheme. While the cost of approving this request might be low, there is a risk that there would be an expectation of support for future years and that it would set a precedent and other parish councils would come forward with similar requests or with requests for increased support. Therefore the financial risk is assessed as medium.

## 3 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 In preparing this report, the relevance of the following factors has also been considered: prevention of crime and disorder, equalities, environmental, health, human rights, personnel and property.

3.2 Climate Change: This report refers to an application to provide financial support towards the maintenance of a village green. The village green is owned by Calver Parish Council and it is understood by officers that the Parish Council will maintain it whatever decision this Committee makes regarding funding. There is no proposed change to the use of the land at this time. Therefore, no climate change impact assessment is required.

## **4 CONTACT INFORMATION**

- 4.1 Karen Henriksen - Director of Resources  
Telephone: 01629 761284  
Email: karen.henriksen@derbyshiredales.gov.uk

## **5 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 5.1 None

## **6 ATTACHMENTS**

- 6.1 Appendix 1 – Letter from Calver Parish Council dated 17 March 2022