**District Councillor’s Report for The Mordens Ward SCDC April 2019**

**Community Chest Grants**

The first Half of the £58,000 is now available to be bid for in relation to Community Chest Grants, these grants are for up to £1,000. I have mentioned in previous months of the changes to eligibility in excluding the majority of Parish Councils from bidding. Below is the explanation given in a recent press release:

*“the scheme is no longer be open to Parish Councils with more than 160 registered electors. This is because, the larger villages are, the more funding their local Parish Council can raise on their own via their dedicated Council Tax precepts.”*

I am disappointed that this is still the view, I will continue to make the case that a cut off of 160 electors is too low. I personally take the view also that this is an inappropriate criterion, as not all residents are able to vote an d thereby not on the electoral roll, and that given council tax is paid on a household basis, I believe this ought to be the appropriate method of measurement.

**Investment Strategy**

The first investment of £13 million pounds has been made. This is the purchase of an office at the Cambridge Science Park. With this being a large amount spent so soon, it is unknown to councillors such as myself whether this will result in a request to advance further funds for investment in the first year (In the Budget report it was shown that £20million a year for the next 5 years would be spent on investments made from the £100 million to be borrowed from the PWLB). At a recent Audit and Corporate Governance meeting it was also reported that this purchase has been made from Cash reserves as opposed to borrowing which had been the strategy proposed in the budget to full council on the 21st February 2019.

**Elite Athletes Grant Scheme**

I’m very disappointed to report that on 3rd April Cabinet took a decision to discontinue the elite Athletes Grant Scheme. I know residents of this ward have benefitted from this in the past. Unfortunately, the new administration does not feel this fits in with their objectives. When this was discussed in a workshop I argued strongly that this grant was a great help to many aspiring young athletes and their parents as often the training and equipment is very costly and a barrier for some to progress with their talent. This pot of money (£10,000) was not a great sum in comparison to the entire expenditure of the council and could have and should have been continued in my view. I’d also like to add that this decision was taken with no consultation process.

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