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Dear Robert, Linda and Michael,

Thank you for your email dated 30 June, to the Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP, regarding Covid-19 and financial support for town and parish councils. I appreciate how important this matter is to you and I am grateful to you for contacting my Department with your concerns. I am replying as this matter falls within my ministerial responsibilities.

I am immensely grateful to local councils across the country for all that they have done throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. From shielding the most vulnerable to accommodating rough sleepers and supporting businesses, your tireless efforts have kept the nation safe during what is undoubtedly the most trying time in many of our lifetimes.

I recognise that all tiers of government have been working collaboratively to provide support where it is most needed. I am very grateful to parish and town councils, to their members and clerks for the vital work they are doing to support communities. They harness the networks of familiarity and loyalty upon which society is built and have the relationships to support the vulnerable, which is especially crucial during this national crisis.

The Government does not have powers to offer direct financial support to parish and town councils. We have encouraged principal authorities (district and unitary councils) to discuss this funding with parish and town councils where they are delivering Covid-19 related services. Parish and town councils should therefore liaise with the relevant principal authorities on how this money is allocated in their area.

The emergency funding is to support councils where they are delivering Covid-19 related services. We have particularly asked local authorities to prioritise adult social care, children's services, public health services, fire and rescue services, household waste services, shielding the clinically extremely vulnerable people, homelessness and rough sleeping, domestic abuse, and managing excess deaths.

The Government has noted that there are some concerns among town and parish councils around Council Tax support funding, particularly where a local authority does not intend to pass on such funding to parish and town councils. We also know that Local Council Tax Support schemes are under more pressure than usual as employment rates fall during the pandemic. All relevant decisions about local government funding will be taken at the Spending Review.

On 7 August, the Government published a clarification regarding the eligibility of town and parish councils for all three Covid-19 business support grant schemes. The conditions that town and parish councils must meet in order to qualify for each have been set out in the guidance for each of these schemes, which can be found on the Government website.

Once again, thanks for writing in on these important matters and sharing your concerns.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'L. Hall', written in a cursive style.

LUKE HALL MP