

TITLE OF REPORT : CHAMPION NEWS AND FINANCE REPORT

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 To advise the Committee of the activities and schemes with which the Community Development Officer has been involved.
- 1.2 To bring to the Committee's attention some important community-based activities that will be taking place during the next few months.
- 1.3 To bring to the Committee's attention details of recent requests received for Area Committee Development Discretionary Grant Funding made by community groups and local organisations.
- 1.4 To advise the Committee on the current expenditure and balances of the Area Committee delegated budgets.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note the activities and schemes with which the Community Development Officer has been involved.
- 2.2 The Committee is asked to note the budgetary expenditure, balances and carry forwards within the Area Committee Development Budget Spreadsheet attached as Appendix 1.
- 2.3 The Committee considers awarding funding support to the Baldock Scout Group in the region of £1,178.45 as detailed in 8.4 and Appendix 3 of this report.
- 2.4 That the Committee considers awarding support funding in relation to any potential Highways schemes as proposed and discussed under section 8.4 of this report.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To ensure that the Committee are kept informed of the work of the Community Development Officer.

- 3.2 This report is intended to inform Members of the financial resources available to the Committee. It draws attention to the current budgetary situation, assists in the effective financial management of the Area Committee's budget and ensures actions are performed within the Authority's Financial Regulations and the guidance in the Grants Policy.
- 3.3 The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims and Strategic Priorities of the Council.
- 3.4 Production of this report is a requirement of the 'Priorities for the District' in which the Community Development Officer is required to produce a formal report to the Area Committee 6 occasions per annum in line with the Civic Calendar.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 There are no alternative options being proposed other than those detailed within the text of this report. However in the course of debate at committee, Members may wish to comment and offer additional views on any of the items raised within this report.

5. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS

- 5.1 Consultation with Members has occurred in connection with the allocation of funds for Community Projects.
- 5.2 Consultation with the respective officers and external agencies / groups has taken place with regard to the funding proposals for Area Committee Discretionary Development Funds.

6. FORWARD PLAN

- 6.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key decision and has not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1 Members are asked to note the information detailed in Appendix 1 Area Committee Budget Spreadsheet, which relates to the Area Committee budget balances for the 2013/14 financial year.
- 7.2 The spreadsheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial year 2012/13 including balances and past expenditure relating to the allocated and un-allocated budgets available to the Committee.
- 7.3 This report has been produced to keep Members informed of the work of the Community Development Officer for Baldock. This is a requirement of the 'Priorities for the District' in which the Community Development Officer is required to produce a report for members on 6 occasions per annum.

- 7.4 Members are asked to note the funding applications currently being considered as detailed in the table below.

Details to Follow

8. PROJECT/ACTIVITY/SCHEME DETAILS

8.1 Baldock Town & District Partnership

The Baldock Town & District Partnership (BTADP) has held two events since the September Area Committee meeting. These were the October Farmers' Market and the Baldock 10k run.

Farmers Markets

The monthly Farmers' Market returned to Baldock High Street in March following a winter break. As with last year, the format has remained the same with the monthly market being held on the second Saturday of each month.

During 2013, the Farmers' Market has performed extremely well with an average of 18 stalls in attendance monthly compared with just 8 stalls during 2012.

Weekly Markets

The weekly market continues to operate with 7 regular stalls each week.

Memberships

Update to follow

Baldock Town Guide

The BDATP is working on a new Baldock Town Guide.

Events

Future events planned by the BTADP include:

- Baldock Beast

8.2 Ashwell Multi- Terrain Half Marathon

The second Ashwell Multi-terrain Half Marathon was held on Sunday 24th November 2013 and ran over the same course as last year.

8.3 Baldock Christmas Weekend

The Baldock Town and District Partnership (BTADP) Christmas events were held on Friday 29th and Saturday 30th November 2013.

8.4 1st Baldock Scouts Grant Application

The Scout Group is seeking support funding from the Area Committee in order to:

- Replace a 34 year old tent that was irreparably damaged whilst being used earlier this year
- Help in the purchase of a second marquee tent for use at camps when the weather is wet
- Purchase associated ground sheets & storm guys.

The Troop have raised 50% of the funds required and have asked if the Area Committee would consider matching their funds with a Discretionary Grant of £1,178.45.

8.5 Highways Matters

A section entitled 'Highways Matters' is included within all the Area Champions' News Reports for each committee, designed primarily to facilitate debate and enable appropriate feedback on any of the proposed or listed schemes. This is to ensure that communication remains effective between district & county.

Any new proposals or revised schemes will be forwarded to the respective Herts County Councillor for consideration who will in turn report back and advise the Committee accordingly.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Terms of Reference in relation to Area Committees confirm that they may establish and maintain relationships with outside bodies/voluntary organisations which includes discretionary grant aid/financial support. However, this does not include grants for district wide activities.
- 9.2 Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides that the Council has power to do anything which it considers likely to promote or improve the economic, social or environmental well-being of its area. This would apply on the basis that financial assistance to voluntary and community organisations improves the economic, social or environmental well-being of the District or part of it.
- 9.3 Section 137 Local Government Act 1972 provides specific authority for the Council to incur expenditure on anything which is in the interests of and will bring direct benefit to its area. This includes a charity or other body operating for public service.
- 9.4 The Committee has delegated powers to administer funds from the budgets described.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Members are asked to note the information detailed in Appendix 1 of the report, which relates to the Area Committee budget balances for the current financial year 2013/14.
- 10.2 The spreadsheet also details the pre-allocations carried forward from the previous financial year 2012/13 to the current financial year 2013/14.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no risk entries that have been recorded on Covalent, the Council's Performance & Risk system. Individual events should have their own risk assessments in place to mitigate any health and safety issues.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 The Equality Act 2010 came into force on the 1st October 2010, a major piece of legislation. The Act also created a new Public Sector Equality Duty, which came into force on the 5th April 2011. There is a General duty, described in 12.2, that public bodies must meet, underpinned by more specific duties which are designed to help meet them.
- 12.2 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of its functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 12.3 The projects which comprise the Community Development Officers' workload, and area committee funding assigned to community projects are assessed to ensure that they are as inclusive as possible to members of the local community. The only deviation to this is where a minority group may specifically receive funding or allocation of resources to address a particular area of need or 'gap' in provision.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 As the recommendations made in this report do not constitute a public service contract, the measurement of 'social value' as required by the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 need not be applied, although equalities implications and opportunities are identified in the relevant section at paragraphs 12.

14. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 There are no pertinent Human Resource implications associated with any items within this report.

15. APPENDICES

- 15.1 Appendix 1 - Area Committee Development Budget Spreadsheet.
- 15.2 Appendix 2 – Area Committee Work Programme 2013/14.
- 15.3 Appendix 3 – Grant Form 1st Baldock Scouts Group to Follow

16. CONTACT OFFICERS

- 16.1 Author: Ashley Hawkins (Community Development Officer – Baldock & District Area)
Telephone: 01462 474225
Email: ashley.hawkins@north-herts.gov.uk
- 16.1 Contributors: Shah Mohammed, Assistant Accountant
Telephone: 01462 474 4240
EMail: shah.mohammed@north-herts.gov.uk

Liz Green, Head of Policy & Community Services
Telephone: 01462 474230
Email: liz.green@north-herts.gov.uk

17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 17.1 Review of Policies and Procedures for Financial Assistance to Voluntary and Community Organisations, November 2002.