

**TITLE OF REPORT: GRANT APPLICATIONS AND COMMUNITY UPDATE**

## 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 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 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 budgetary expenditure, balances and carry forwards within the Area Committee Development Budget Spread sheet attached as Appendix 1
- 2.2 The Committee considers a Grant Award of £500 to the Baldock Town Partnership to assist with costs associated with the Baldock Cycle Challenge, including publicity costs, signage and first aid equipment.
- 2.3 The Committee considers a Grant Award of £500 to Balstock Music Festival to assist with publicity costs, security costs, St John Ambulance, hire of inflatables and Public Liability Insurance.
- 2.4 The Committee discuss and formally approves the recent release of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) Grants, for **financial year 2015 only** to the 7 Groups in Baldock that currently benefit namely Baldock Town Twinning (£240), Ashwell Museum (£260), Baldock Festival (£820), Baldock Retirement Sewing Club (£320), Baldock Rotary Club (£750), Baldock Seniors Club (£1,040) and Baldock Town Partnership (£1,860). The MoU funding was released during May 2015 after each group had submitted the relevant paperwork.
- 2.5 That the Committee considers awarding support funding in relation to any potential Highways schemes, provided they align with the NHDC Medium Term Financial Strategy, and as proposed and discussed under section 8.8 of this report.

- 2.6 That the Committee endorses the actions taken by the Community Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being for the Baldock & District Area.
- 2.7 That the Committee notes and agrees the deduction of £700 from the area committee's budget to enable sufficient budget to fund districtwide organisations **for financial year 2015 only** (see para 7.6) pending the outcome of the authority's Grants review.

### **3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 To ensure the Committee is kept informed of the work of the Community 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 of 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 Priorities of the Council.

### **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 funding proposals for Area Committee 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. ISSUES**

- 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 2015/16 financial year.
- 7.2 The spreadsheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial year 2014/15 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 Officer for Baldock & District.
- 7.4 The Committee considers a Grant Award of £500 to the Baldock Town Partnership to assist with costs associated with the Baldock Cycle Challenge, including publicity costs, signage and first aid equipment.
- 7.5 The Committee considers a Grant Award of £500 to Balstock Music Festival to assist with publicity costs, security costs, St John Ambulance, hire of inflatables and Public Liability Insurance.
- 7.6 The Committee considers a Grant Award of £500 to Friends of Hartsfield School to assist with publicity costs, printing costs and for St John Ambulance to provide First Aid cover at the Baldock Community Fireworks event in October.
- 7.7 Members should note that one of the recommendations arising from the Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group on the Council's grant making process (July 2013) was that a 'district wide pot' should be established in order to enable payments to be made to applicants whose project covered the whole of North Herts, without need to present and apply to each of the Council's five area committees; on further consideration, the Task and Finish Group considered, in their report back to Cabinet in July 2013, that achieving such a pot by removing money from area committees may not be the most appropriate, but that the Head of Policy and Community Services be tasked with considering this issue as part of the grants review.

In the process of the overall grants policy review to date, the Head of Policy and Community Service has highlighted not only that multiple applications to area committees is resource intensive for both applicant and Council officers/administrative costs but nor does it accord with the Council's Constitution in regard to area committees, which states at 9.8.2 community (h);

- (h) To establish and maintain relationships with outside bodies/voluntary organisations operating specifically within the area including, where appropriate, the provision of discretionary grant aid/financial support etc. **but excluding grants for district-wide activities (as determined by the Head of Policy and Community Services).**

It has therefore been agreed in discussion with the Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement and Rural Affairs that a small budget of £6.1k be established **for the financial year 2015 only**, by reducing each area committee grant by a proportionate amount toward this districtwide budget. The relevant amounts to be deducted from each area committee budget are as follows;

Area Committee	£
Baldock	700
Hitchin	1,600
Letchworth	1,600

Royston	900
Southern Rural	1,300
<b>Total</b>	<b>£6,100</b>

Awards from the budget will be made under existing delegations, following discussion with the portfolio holder for Community Engagement and Rural Affairs. Applications received will be included within this report to area committees, and the decision notice published thereafter in the Members Information Service.

This is only intended to be an interim measure, as there are no alternative budgets available from which to create a districtwide pot. Once the review of Major MoUs and grant process is completed shortly, then the way in which all districtwide activities are funded can be considered and agreed together.

7.8 Members are reminded that the Council's policy in regard to town centre partnerships is to gradually phase out and ultimately withdraw from grant funding in order that town centres become self sustaining (Council, budget setting 2010/11); for Baldock, a Major MoU agreement remains in place, albeit reducing gradually year on year. Whilst Community Officer support has necessarily reduced in recent years due to restructure, the Baldock Town Centre Partnership as all North Herts Town Partnerships, still receives proportionate officer support in order to organise and facilitate events which keep the town centre(s) vibrant and increase footfall.

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

<b>Ward</b>	<b>Project</b>
Baldock Town / Baldock East	Funding support for Baldock Community Centre to assist with cost for enhancement works and DDA improvements to the Youth Wing building.
Baldock Town	Funding support for St Mary's Church to assist with new publicity materials to promote the church including a new illustrated Church History booklet and a Discovery Trail for school children.
Baldock Town	Funding support to Howard Cottage Housing Association to assist with costs for running a dementia support group in the Baldock Area.

## **8. PROJECT/ACTIVITY/SCHEME DETAILS**

### **8.1 Baldock Town Partnerships**

Detailed below is an update on the recent activity of the Baldock Town Partnership.

#### Markets

Since the March Meeting the Baldock Town Partnership (BTP) has continued to successfully run the March and April Farmers Market as well as the

Baldock Weekly Market. In terms of the Monthly Farmers Market, this is currently running with 10-12 regular stalls in attendance. The BTP are actively seeking new stalls to the monthly market and have reduced the fee for stall holders as an extra incentive to encourage take up.

The weekly Market continues to thrive at the new location on the grass by the White Lion Public House. There are currently 6 regular stalls with interest shown from 4 other traders who will hopefully sign up before the summer months.

#### BTP Networking

The BTP continues to run a variety of successful business networking events. As well as raising the profile of the BTP and local businesses, the events are important income generators for the BTP. The BTP continues to run a fortnightly Baldock Network Group (BNG) breakfast meeting at The Orange Tree Public House which has 25 regular members. The group also operates a monthly evening network event, which is supported by 50 members and is held at various venues around Baldock. Both of these networking groups have seen considerable growth in the last 6 months.

#### Memberships

As part of the BTP's drive to be self sufficient, the group continues to run a membership scheme which all businesses in Baldock are invited to sign up for. As a member, businesses receive support from the Partnership both in terms of promoting their businesses on the Partnership website, in the local papers and on publicity materials for key partnership events. Memberships currently generate £960 monthly for the Partnership.

#### Upcoming events of the BTP

- Baldock Cycle Challenge (Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> June )
- Baldock Day (Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> July)

### 8.2 **Sale Drive**

The NHDC legal team in order to get the matter finished sent Barratts lawyers a transfer deed sealed by the District Council with a request that Barratts sign, pay any outstanding fees and complete the deal.

On the 13 May Barratts lawyers stated that Barratts had not signed the transfer deed because Barratts wanted NHDC to take extra land in addition to the area already agreed.

This extra land was in the original Highways Agreement but had been removed at the request of Barratts in 2001 to enable Barratts to develop their adjoining site.

Officers are exploring the potential unexpected cost and practical maintenance issues of taking over and maintaining this additional land.

Funding for the works has been forwarded to Highways for the works and the works have been added to the Highways Work Programme but cannot be carried out until the land adoption has been completed.

### 8.3 **Baldock Festival**

The Baldock Community Officer has been assisting the Baldock Festival Committee with plans for the 32<sup>nd</sup> Baldock Festival. The Baldock CO has helped to promote the festival by delivering the Festival programme to the villages including Bygrave, Newnham, Radwell, Wallington and Sandon. The Baldock CO has also helped the Festival Committee with the Event paperwork that is required by the North Herts Safety Advisory Group as well as the parking arrangements.

The Baldock CO will also assist with the set up and take down of the Baldock Street Festival event in Baldock High Street as well as several of the community events of the Baldock Fortnight including the Community Lunches and the Book Fair.

### 8.4 **Baldock Big Lunch**

The Baldock Big Lunch will be returning to Baldock High Street for a fifth time on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> June. The Big Lunch is a nationwide initiative set up by the Eden Project which encourages communities to come together and sit down for lunch. This event has always proved popular in Baldock with the 2014 event attracting around 400 people.

As with previous Big Lunch events, there will be live music, including a performance from "Pan Nation" a London based Steel Orchestra. There will also be inflatables and face painting for the children.

A variety of food options will be available at the Big Lunch including Roast Pork or Lasagne from The White Lion, Greek Salad or Ploughman's from Taste Café, Indian buffet from The Lancer, Fish and Chips from Coxs or a BBQ from the Baldock Town Partnership.

Tickets for the event can be purchased from the Community Centre and are priced at £8 adult and £4 child.

The Baldock CO will assist the BTP with the planning for this event and will also help with the completion of all paperwork that is required by North Herts Safety Advisory Group.

### 8.5 **Baldock Cycle Challenge**

The Baldock Cycle Challenge will be returning for a third time on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> June. This event is held as part of National Bike Week and is being co-ordinated again by the Baldock Town Partnership in conjunction with Stevenage and North Herts CTC, who provide the insurance for the event.

The format for the ride and the route remain the same with riders given the choice of a checkpoint based ride or a sportive approach.

Entry for the ride opened on 2<sup>nd</sup> March and currently 20 riders have signed up. The event was supported by close to 200 riders in 2014 and 2013, so a similar field is expected in 2015.

The Baldock CO will assist with the event paperwork for the Baldock Cycle Challenge and will provide advice during the race planning.

**8.6 Balstock Community Event**

The Balstock Community Event will be returning for a fifth time between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> September 2015. The Balstock event is growing annually and is an important event for the pubs and other businesses of the town, which benefit from increased footfall.

The Balstock Community Event will again be held in Baldock High Street and will combine live music and fun activities for all the family, including fun fair rides and inflatables. There will also be a number of food vendors available.

**8.7 Baldock Community Firework Event**

The Baldock Firework Event will be returning to Baldock for a third time on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> October. The event will again be held at Hartsfield School with the firework show being provided as with previous years by Tapps Garden Centre.

Unlike previous years, the 2015 event will be co-ordinated by the Friends of Hartsfield School and not the Baldock Town Partnership. The event will involve other local schools and community groups who will be given the opportunity to have stalls at the event so that they can fundraise for their own causes.

All profit from the event will be donated to the Baldock Rotary Club to assist with the purchase of a new sleigh.

The Baldock CO will provide support to the Friends of Hartsfield School in the planning of this event to ensure that it runs smoothly and without incident.

The Friends of Hartsfield School have submitted a Funding Application to the Baldock & District Committee for funding support for this event.

**8.8 Highways Matters**

It was agreed that a section entitled 'Highways Matters' is included within the Area Champion's News Report for each committee cycle to facilitate debate and enable appropriate feedback on any of the proposed or listed schemes.

Any new proposals 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 include discretionary grants/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 **as a body** has delegated powers to administer funds from the budgets described. Whilst individual ward members may comment on and support (or not) any grant application put before the committee, the decision to award is afforded only to the Baldock and District Area Committee itself under the Council's Constitution and provided such committee is quorate at the time of such decision.

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 In the past few years there has been no inflationary allowance to the main Area Committee Budget and the 2015/16 baseline budget has stayed the same as the previous year.
- 10.2 The MoU arrangements as detailed in 2.3 are for a period of 1 year only and will be reviewed again in 2016. These replace the former three year MoUs which ended in March 2015.

## **11. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 There are no relevant 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. There are no pertinent risk implications for the Authority associated with any items within this report.

## **12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1 The Equality Act 2010 came into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2010, a major piece of legislation. The Act also created a new Public Sector Equality Duty, which came into force on the 5<sup>th</sup> 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 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 Spread sheet.
- 15.2 Appendix 2 – Area Committee Work Programme 2015/16.
- 15.3 Appendix 3 – Grant Application for Baldock Town Partnership.
- 15.4 Appendix 4 – Grant Application for Balstock Community Event
- 15.5 Appendix 5 – Grant Application for Friends of Hartsfield School

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## **17. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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

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