

**BALDOCK & DISTRICT COMMITTEE
5 MARCH 2017**

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

AGENDA ITEM No.

7

TITLE OF REPORT: GRANTS, AND COMMUNITY UPDATE

REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF FINANCE, POLICY & GOVERNANCE

EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND RURAL AFFAIRS:
COUNCILLOR TONY HUNTER

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 is asked to allocate any likely budget underspend from 2016/17 to potential projects to be carried forward to the Committee's 2017/18 budget.
- 2.3 The Committee is asked to note that the following sums need to be transferred to the Baldock Town Base Budget from the Baldock East 2015/16 carry forward budget for grants that were agreed at the December 2016 Baldock & District Area Committee meeting.

The Baldock East member was not in attendance but agreed to support the following applications:

- £108 towards the Ashwell Music Festival Grant
- £48 towards the Small Acts of Kindness Grant.

- 2.4 The Committee considers releasing £120, split across the four wards in the usual way to enable the Committee to purchase a banner that can be used to help promote future Councillor Surgeries.
The commitment from each ward would be; Baldock Town (52% / £64), Baldock East (16% / £19), Arbury (18% / £21) and Weston & Sandon (14% / £16).
- 2.5 The Committee considers a grant award of £2,000 to Rotary Club of Baldock to assist with maintenance costs and the purchase of additional Christmas Lights for Baldock.
- 2.6 The Committee considers a grant award of £1,000 to Baldock Town Twinning Association to assist with costs for hosting Twinning visitors from the French village of Sanvignes in 2017 and the German village Eisenberg in 2018.
- 2.7 The Committee considers a grant award of £150 to Baldock Methodist Church to assist with costs for purchasing storage units for storing toys and equipment used by Tiny Tots Mothers and Toddlers Group.
- 2.8 The Committee considers a grant award of £150 to Ashwell Village Trust for equipment and materials for the Ashwell Well Dressing project from the Arbury Ward Budget.

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, budget strategy 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 expressed in the Corporate Plan.

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 RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

- 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's budget for the 2016/17 financial year.
- 7.2 The spreadsheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial year 2015/16 including balances and past expenditure relating to the allocated and un-allocated budgets available to the Committee.
- 7.3 The current level of funding available within the Area Committee's 2016/17 Area Grant Budget is:-

Baldock Town £3,996

Baldock East £1.600

Arbury £438

Weston & Sandon £1,200

- 7.4 The current level of funding available which has been carried forward from the 2015/16 Area Grant Budget is:-

Baldock Town £8

Baldock East £516

Arbury £0

Weston & Sandon £1,169

A full area breakdown is given within the Area Committee's Budget Spreadsheet Appendix 1.

8. ISSUES

- 8.1 This report has been produced to keep Members informed of the work of the Community Officers covering for Baldock & District area.

8.2 Grant funding

8.2.1 Rotary Club of Baldock

Rotary Club of Baldock has been operating since 1953. The group plays an important role in Baldock, providing practical and financial help to the local community through charitable grants, supporting projects and human resources.

Since 1978 the Rotary Club of Baldock has been providing and installing Christmas lighting displays for the town. Over the years, there has been wear & tear on these units / lights and the group has purchased additional lights and is now looking to increase light coverage in 2017 to include the upper High Street area.

The requested funding will be used for safety checking of electrical service points and for new lighting panels to extend existing coverage. The amount requested is within the limit of the new funding criteria which states that up to 70% of overall project cost can be allocated by the committee.

There is sufficient funding available within the Baldock Town and Baldock East base budgets for this project.

It should be noted that the group has received £17,940 in funding since 2002 via Area Committee funds. Also whilst the support that the group gives to local groups /charities annually (£19,400 in 2016) is to be commended, moving forward their could be the view that the group should consider perhaps retaining some of its income generated to assist with the annual installation of Christmas lights in future years.

8.2.2 Baldock Town Twinning

Baldock Town Twinning Association is seeking £1,000 to contribute towards the total cost of £3,000 for visits from the Twin Towns of Sanvignes in 2017 and Eisenberg in 2018.

The Town Twinning was set up in 1988 and is currently made up of 31 members. The exchange visits help to raise the profile of Baldock and increase footfall for the businesses of the town. Funding will enable the Town Twinning group to hold two celebratory events with its twinning neighbours in 2017 and 2018.

Funding being sought is to cover costs the Gala Dinner event at Letchworth Golf Club, local entertainers, local coach hire and trips / days out.

It should be noted that Area Committee funding cannot be used for food or beverages, although funding is allowed to cover coach hire and local entertainers, which from the application is £850.

8.2.3 Baldock Methodist Church

Baldock Methodist Church is seeking £150 to contribute towards the total cost of £180 for internal storage units. The group is trying to generally engage more with the community within Baldock and the surrounding area. As part of this process, the Church set up Tiny Tots, a mothers and toddlers group in October 2016. The group meets regularly and currently has 30 children and mothers attending the sessions.

The funding requested will enable the church to purchase internal units for storing the group's toys and games. The storage will also be made available to other community groups using the church in the provision of local activities.

8.2.4 Ashwell Village Trust

The Ashwell Village Trust is seeking £150 to contribute towards the total cost of £210 for materials for the Ashwell Well Dressing project as part of the Ashwell At Home event.

8.3 Community update

8.3.1 Sale Drive

After many years the Baldock CO is pleased to announce that the path and lighting improvements works at Sale Drive are now complete and the route is being regularly used.

8.3.2 **Event Support**

The Baldock CO is providing support to both the Baldock Festival Committee and Balstock Committee in the early stages of planning for their respective events in 2017.

The support focus at this stage is ensuring that all event organisers have the correct licenses and permit applications in place. The Baldock CO is meeting with both groups as required and is also co-ordinating the First Aid cover for all events in Baldock and Royston to ensure that first aid element is consistent, uniform across as many events as possible, which ultimately will lead to a more cost effective rate for each of the organisers.

8.3.3 **Baldock Community Forum**

The Baldock CO & CM are working with Baldock Members, Richard Sell and local Community Groups to set up a new Community Interest Company which will take on some of the former roles of the Baldock Town Partnership.

A public meeting will be held in March with local community groups to establish the remit of the new body and membership make up of the new committee.

8.3.2 **Other Baldock initiatives the CO & CM have been involved with:**

- Further funding advice & support re internal enhancements at Weston Village Hall.
- s106 / Planning Contributions advice to Ashwell Parish Council re enhancements to the existing Toilet blocks serving the Recreation Ground. Plus additional advice / support re possible future improvements to the pavilion and other projects within the village, perhaps via a future application to the Authority's Community Facilities Capital Projects Funding Scheme.
- Guidance re Baldock & Bygrave Neighbourhood Plan.

8.4 **Highways Matters**

This section is included within the community update report for each committee cycle to facilitate debate and enable appropriate feedback on any of the proposed or listed Highways related schemes.

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 include discretionary grant aid/financial support but excluding grants for district-wide activities. The Committee has delegated powers, as a body, to allocate discretionary budgets and devolved budgets within the terms determined by the Council and outlined in the current Grant Policy agreed by Cabinet in June 2016.

9.2 Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides a General Power of Competence which gives local authorities the power to do anything that individuals generally may do. This may be for, or otherwise than for the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident in its area.

- 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 & 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 Appendix 1 provides details of the 2016/17 budget position for the Area Committee.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no relevant risk entries that have been recorded on Covalent, the Council's performance and risk system. Individual events should have their own risk assessments in place to mitigate any health and safety issues. Whenever a request for grant funding for equipment is received, the recipient of the funding will be advised to obtain insurance for the item to avoid a repeat request for funding in the event of the equipment being stolen or damaged. 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 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 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 2016/17.
- 15.2 Appendix 2 – Grant Form – Rotary Club of Baldock
- 15.3 Appendix 3 – Grant Form – Baldock Town Twinning
- 15.4 Appendix 4 – Grant Form – Baldock Methodist Church
- 15.5 Appendix 5 – Grant Form – Ashwell Village Trust

16. CONTACT OFFICERS

16.1 Author: Ashley Hawkins, Community Development Officer
Telephone: 01462 474225
Email: ashley.hawkins@north-herts.gov.uk

16.2 Contributors: Anne Miller, Assistant Accountant
Telephone: 01462 474374
EMail: anne.miller@north-herts.gov.uk

Kerry Shorrocks, Corporate Human Resources Manager
Telephone: 01462 474224
Email: Kerry.shorrocks@north-herts.gov.uk

Tim Everitt, Performance Improvement Officer
Telephone: 01462 474646
Email: tim.everitt@north-herts.gov.uk

Reuben Ayavoo, Policy Officer
Telephone: 01462 474212
Email: reuben.ayavoo@north-herts.gov.uk

Anthony Roche, Corporate Legal Manager and Monitoring Officer
Telephone: 01462 474588
Email: Anthony.roche@north-herts.gov.uk

17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 17.1 Review of Policies and Procedures for Financial Assistance to Voluntary and Community Organisations, November 2002.
- 17.2 Grants Review June 2016 – Cabinet Papers 14th June 2016.