

*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT	AGENDA ITEM No.
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TITLE OF REPORT: CHAMPION NEWS AND FINANCE REPORT

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

PORTFOLIO HOLDER: COUNCILLOR TRICIA COWLEY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Committee on the current expenditure and balances of the Area Committee delegated budgets.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 To advise the Committee of the activities and schemes with which the Community Development Officer has been involved.
- 1.4 To bring to the Committee's attention some important community based activities that will be taking place during the next few months.

2. FORWARD PLAN

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

3. PROJECT/ACTIVITY/SCHEME DETAILS

3.1 TASTE 2011

On a very hot Saturday in October, the fourth TASTE Event took place. It was attended by reps from the Football, Karate & Judo Clubs, the Scouts, YOR radio, Voice, Youth Band and Sea Cadets. All the groups find the event very useful in raising awareness of their activities. It is planned to increase the number of organisations taking part next year.

At the event, the Voice of Hitchin Youth had a questionnaire for young people to complete asking for their views on Hitchin and for any issues they feel strongly about. It also asked them to choose activities they would like to have in Hitchin. A summary of issues raised and activities requested will be presented to the Committee by the Voice at the January 2012 meeting.

3.2 Member School Surgeries

Plans are being made for the surgeries this academic year.

In Hitchin Boys School the surgery will take place this term on **Tuesday 6th December, 2011**. The teacher at the Boys School has suggested trying a new format and Members' input on this would be welcomed.

At Hitchin Girls School the surgery this term will take place on **Thursday 8th December, 2011**. Members are requested as to their availability for these dates.

Still awaiting a reply from The Priory School re dates & times.

3.3 Cadwell Lane

It has been advised that a date has been set for a full hearing of the High Court Appeal by Hertfordshire County Council Planning regarding Metal and Waste Recycling. The date is **Tuesday 31st January 2012.**

3.4 Young People of the Year Awards

The Hertfordshire Young People of the Year Awards Ceremony took place on Monday 26th September 2011. The group of young people from Urban Saints, who built the two houses in Mexico in 2010, were finalists this year.

3.5 The Priory School Vietnam Trip

The trip by Priory school pupils to Vietnam went very well and photographs and information will be available at the meeting.

3.6 Buzzworks

The Community Bee Garden continues to flourish. It welcomes visitors and schools and other groups. Buzzworks is open on Wednesday and Saturday mornings 10am to 1pm.

A second community garden has been started by Buzzworks at the Burford Way Allotments called Honeyworks. It is still being developed and it is hoped that it will be open in Spring 2012.

3.7 Vaisakhi 2012

The Vaisakhi Procession will take place on Saturday 14th April, 2012.

Discussions will take place with the responsible authorities to ensure a smooth and safe procession.

3.8 Democracy

Scouts from 11th Hitchin Scout troop are going to take part in a Democracy evening in the Council Chamber on Thursday 24th November, 2012 from 7.30pm – 9.30pm. A programme for the evening is being worked out and Members will be kept informed.

3.9 Hitchin Rotary 2012

Hitchin Rotary Clubs are planning a Hitchin 2012 Olympic Sports weekend on 7th and 8th July, 2012. Sporting Clubs and schools will be involved and it will culminate with a celebration and medal ceremony.

3.10 Groundwork Hertfordshire/YOR Radio

Groundwork Hertfordshire have received funding from the DfE Young People Friendly Neighbourhoods Programme 2011- 2013. They will be working in partnership with local organisations to deliver services in Purwell, Westmill and Sunnyside as well as the Town Centre.

The strategy is to make access to local youth provision but also to draw young people to a central location to work collectively on large scale initiatives. YOR Radio will be part of the delivery and the radio launches on Tuesday 18th October, 2011 at Bancroft Youth Centre.

The delivery will take place weekly on a rotation around the four areas. The NEET provision will operate along similar lines. All of the projects have started and staff are also working with the Youth Council.

3.11 Hitchin Area Work Programme

The updated Hitchin Area Committee Work programme is attached as Appendix D.

3.12 **Highways Work Programme**

The updated Highways Work Programme is attached as Appendix E.

3.13 **Diary dates**

Friday 25th November 2011 – Christmas Lights Switch On plus music and street entertainment 4pm – 8pm

Sunday 11th December 2011 – Gala Day

Sunday 18th December 2011 - Father Christmas arrives

Wednesday 21st December - Rotary Carols

Saturday 24th December 2011 - Christmas Eve Local Produce Market

4. **FINANCE REPORT & FUNDING DECISIONS TO BE MADE**

4.1 The Committee is asked to note the budgetary expenditure, balances and carry forwards from the Development Budgets and the Visioning Budgets

4.2 The Committee's updated Annual Grant and Development Discretionary Budget spreadsheet is attached as Appendix A.

4.3 Members are requested to consider the application from Hitchin Town Centre Initiative for funding to support the establishment of a community enterprise and training shop, for a 6 month period initially, for young people aged 18 – 25.

4.4 Members are requested to consider future commitments under the MoU process and note that any further award of MoU grants remain subject to a 7.1% annual reduction each year of the three year term. Members may wish to explore and discuss options to reduce or remove some grants in favour of others.

Details of funding currently provided to the organisations under the MoU, as well as indicative funding for future years is shown on Appendix B.

A précis of the current MoUs is shown at 4.5. Invitations have been given to three of the organisations, currently receiving funding under the MoUs, to provide a presentation at the Hitchin Area Committee meeting in November and the remaining two organisation at the Area Committee meeting in January 2012.

4.5 **Memorandum of Understanding**

There are currently five Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) within the Hitchin Area Committee budget as outlined below.

Apni Duniya Holiday Playschemes

Apni Duniya provide play schemes during school half terms, Easter and Summer holidays for young people in Hitchin aged 4 – 12 years.

Up to 30 young people attend the schemes which run daily from 8.30am – 6pm at Wilshere Dacre School.

The young people bring a packed lunch and receive breakfast and afternoon snack. Activities are heavily subsidised in order to support young people who may not otherwise be able to attend. Costs are also kept low for this reason.

The group will present in January 2012

Hitchin Initiative

The funding the Initiative receives contributes towards the Christmas lights and hanging baskets which make the town a more attractive place for residents and visitors.

The money also contributes to maintaining the office as an information point for the residents of Hitchin and visitors to the town.

Hitchin Town Twinning

The aims of the Town Twinning Association are to provide for the promotion of the three towns both in Hitchin and Bingen in Germany and Nuits-St. Georges in France. Hitchin has been twinned with Bingen and Rhein since 1958 and with Nuits St Georges since 1976.

The It is the host town that organises and pays for special events, dinners, outings for the guests. In Hitchin this usually involves a Wine Evening, BBQ and a Soirée.

Association have also assisted other Hitchin organisations to twin with their counterparts in France and Germany through music, sport, schools and church.

Membership of the Association is free and members who have hosted and visited, all comment on the experience, the enjoyment and the excellent hospitality they have received.

The group will present in January 2012

Hitchin Senior Citizens

The aims of the Hitchin Senior Citizens are:

- to provide meals entertainment and social interaction for senior citizens who reside within Hitchin, Holwell, Ickleford and Pirton
- to provide transport to enable many of these participants to attend functions

Senior Citizens continue to enjoy the social interaction provided for them but in recent years senior citizens are more active and are looking for different entertainment. Hitchin Senior Citizens have recently taken under their 'umbrella', a group providing sit down exercises to senior citizens and these have proved very popular. Hitchin Senior Citizens make a contribution to this in order for it to continue. They also now support the Tea Dances to enable that activity to continue.

As senior citizens look for a wider variety of interesting and active activities, the Hitchin Senior Citizens group will continue to support them in finding and continuing these new ventures.

The organisation have recently altered their Constitution to reflect this in agreement with the Charities Commission.

Hitchin Festival

The aim of the Festival is to organise and co-ordinate an annual programme of events which reflects the diverse interests, abilities and skills of the local community. The Festival promotes arts and culture events in Hitchin over the month of July and assists in encouraging local groups and organisations to participate in and get exposure from the free publicity and it also enables these organisations to fund raise.

In 2011 the Festival had over 100 events ranging from ghost walks, lectures, films, art, comedy and a wide variety of musical styles to suit all ages and tastes.

The Festival also brings visitors from far and wide to Hitchin.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 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.

5.2 Section 2 Local Government Act 2000 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.

5.3 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.

5.4 The Committee has delegated powers to administer funds from the budgets described.

6. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

6.1 In the past few years, given the significant carry forward for Area Committee Development budgets, there has been no inflationary allowance other than for MoU's, and the baseline for 2011/12 was the same as 2010/11.

7. HUMAN RESOURCE AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The local MoUs are managed by the Community Development Officer as part of the regular work programme.

7.2 The great majority of the voluntary and community projects that are funded by the Council have equality and social inclusion as a key objective of their purpose. Such projects work very closely with and for the more disadvantaged and potentially socially excluded within our communities.

7.3 All activities undertaken by the Council, its committees, Community Development Officers or agencies working on its behalf are to be conducted in accordance with the NHDC Corporate Equality Strategy and relevant Equalities legislation.

8. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS

8.1 Consultation with Members has occurred in connection with the allocation of funds for Community Projects.

8.2 Consultation with the respective officers and external agencies/groups has taken place with regard to funding proposals for Area Committee Discretionary Development Funds.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 That the Committee endorses the actions taken by the Community Development Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being.

9.2 That the Committee is asked to note the budgetary expenditure and balances carried forward from the Visioning, Development and Ward budgets.

9.3 That the Committee to consider the level of funding to be awarded to Hitchin Town Centre Initiative – Appendix C

10. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To ensure that the Committee are kept informed of the work of the Community Development Officer.
- 10.2 This report is intended simply 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 procedure.
- 10.3 The allocation of funds will improve the services provided by the local organisations and groups that are available and accessed by various members of the community.
- 10.4 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.

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Appendix A - Annual Grant and Development Discretionary Budget Update
- 11.2 Appendix B – Memorandum of Understanding
- 11.3 Appendix C - Hitchin Town Centre Initiative grant application
- 11.4 Appendix D - Hitchin Area Committee Work Plan 2011/2012
- 11.5 Appendix E - Highways Work Programme 2011/2012

12. CONTACT OFFICERS

- 12.1 Margaret Bracey, Community Development Officer. Ext: 4830.
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- 12.2 Lois Stewart, Group Accountant. Ext: 4566.
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13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 13.1 Review of Policies and Procedures for Financial Assistance to Voluntary and Community Organisations, November 2002.
- 13.2 Community Governance Reviews – Full Council Meeting 25th February 2010.