

TITLE OF REPORT: CHAMPION NEWS AND FINANCE REPORT

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

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 Hitchin Children's Centres**

Hitchin has three Children's Centres, Oughton, Bluebell and York Road. All of the Centres offer Hitchin families a wide range of activities including Toy Libraries, encouraging healthy lifestyles, through for example, healthy eating workshops, gardening clubs and welly walks. Oughton also has a yellow double decker bus that goes out to the surrounding villages.

Children's Centres activities help those families who may otherwise be socially isolated and generally have links with other organisations, there by leading to a wider range of activities for people to take part in / benefit.

3.2 Member School Surgeries

This term's Surgeries are programmed to take place in the three Senior Schools during March 2012.

Tuesday 13th March at Hitchin Boys School

Wednesday 14th March at The Priory School

Thursday 15th March at Hitchin Girls School

all sessions 12.30pm – 1.30pm.

Members will be requested to advise of their availability.

3.3 Groundwork Young People Friendly Neighbourhood Project

Youth provision has started in Purwell in the Community Room with a comprehensive programme every Thursday until the Easter holidays. A review will follow looking at the impact the provision has had on young people and the

wider community. Work also continues on Westmill, the Town Centre and through YOR Radio.

An Options paper for the sustainability of the Young People Friendly Neighbourhood Project has been produced, with a recommendation to ensure the programme's long term sustainability by exploring the setting up a Youth Mutual. This model builds on the expertise and skills within the current partnership and the paper identifies the next stage in this process.

This process also includes increasing the membership of the current partnership, developing a detailed action plan with timescales and costings, for moving the partnership on to a potential Youth Mutual and securing expert advice and guidance on this process.

3.4 Charlton Society

Charlton Society have started planning celebrations to mark the 200th anniversary of the birth of Sir Henry Bessemer, 19th January 1813 to take place in what is now Charlton House, but believed to be called Bessemer House some time after his death in 1898.

Sir Henry Bessemer was the inventor of the Bessemer Converter which revolutionised the steel industry.

3.5 North Herts The Sanctuary

North Herts Sanctuary is now managed by St Mungo's homeless services, a charity supporting homeless people. They began managing the Sanctuary in December 2011, and continue to provide:-

- Temporary night shelter accommodation and support.
- The daily drop in service.
- Supporting clients with alcohol and substance misuse and mental and physical health issues.
- Keyworking support and onward referral.
- Hot evening meals, breakfast and packed lunches.

3.6 Afro Caribbean Lunch Club

Plans are being made for a Members Surgery at the Lunch Club and Members will be kept informed re a possible date.

3.7 Hertfordshire Trading Standards - Cold Calling in Hitchin

Councillor Ray Shakespeare-Smith will address the Committee on the matter of cold calling and how this will be addressed.

3.8 King George V Skatepark

The young people have been gathering information and a meeting is to be held very soon with the relevant officers to discuss their proposed plans and perhaps how these can be achieved. Members will be kept informed.

3.9 Voice of Hitchin Youth

The Voice are holding a fund raising stall in the Market Place on Saturday 5th May 2012, their first in 2012.

3.10 The Bancroft Project

The project continues to support homeless and vulnerable people in Hitchin by providing a hot lunch on Sunday's served in Christchurch. The project has recently received financial support from Churches Together in Hitchin, as well as generous donations from Christchurch whose volunteers now work closely with the project.

The Bancroft Project Committee are very grateful for this support and other financial support they have received. The project provides and feeds, on average, 15 – 20 rough sleepers, sofa surfers or Sanctuary clients every Sunday.

The project is also looking for volunteers to give up an hour or two on a Sunday, either on a two weekly or monthly rota, to help provide and serve the meals.

3.11 Street Angels

Street Angels continue to work in Hitchin on Saturday nights. The police have reported a substantial reduction in Anti Social Behaviour over Saturdays / Sundays between 9pm and 2am, since May to December last year.

3.12 North Herts Minority Ethnic Forum

A Members Surgery has been arranged at North Herts Minority Ethnic Forum on Thursday 5th April, 2012, 2pm – 3pm. Members are requested to advise of their availability.

3.13 Cadwell Lane - Metal and Waste Recycling High Court Appeal

The High Court Appeal, lodged by Herts County Council, following the Planning Inspectorate's decision not to impose any restrictions on Metal and Waste Recycling Ltd, which was heard at the Royal Courts of Justice on Tuesday 1st February, was unsuccessful.

The transcript of the decision will be examined with further information available in due course.

3.14 Consent Streets – designation of streets for trading across North Herts

There is a national legislative framework in place regarding consent to trade on streets, but its presence in law does not infer that there is an automatic entitlement to trade, and Local Authorities are therefore required to formally adopt the legislation if they wished to regulate street trading in their areas.

To this end, consultation across the district, including via Area Committees, has taken place regarding what are to be known as 'consent streets', and subsequent reports have been made to the Council's Cabinet on 13th December 2011, and onward for adoption by Full Council on 9th February 2012. Details of the proposals and maps showing the areas in question can be found via the following hyperlink; [www.lac.lac.gov.uk/Full LAC Meetings\21.11.11\Reports\Item 7 - Street Trading Policy.doc](http://www.lac.lac.gov.uk/Full%20LAC%20Meetings/21.11.11/Reports/Item%207%20-%20Street%20Trading%20Policy.doc)

Whilst the principles surrounding entitlement to trade and the areas in which it is permissible to do so have been agreed and adopted by Council, there are a number of legal processes for the authority to complete, including the placement of a public notice in the press for a period of not less than two weeks. A copy of that notice, due be advertised from 1 March, is attached at Appendix H to this report

At the end of those two weeks, and provided there is no challenge arising following this notice, the Council's licensing team will then roll out the implementation process across all four town centres. That will include relevant discussion with town centre managers, and other notable stakeholders across the district, such as the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation, Garden Square precinct, and others who have a land/ownership interest in those town centres. The rolling out of such a process will be therefore be developed and applied consistently, in conjunction with all relevant agencies to meet the needs of the individual town centres.

3.15 Forthcoming Events

Tuesday 13th March 2012 – Hitchin Town Twinning Association Annual General Meeting in Hitchin Town Hall 7.30pm.

Friday 6th April 2012 – Good Friday Walk of Witness

Saturday 14th April 2012 – Vaisakhi Procession

Saturday 21st April, 2012 – Primary Schools Fair

Sunday 20th May 2012 – Walsworth Festival

Saturday 26th May 2012 – Hitchin Health Awareness Day

3.16 Hitchin Area Work Programme

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

3.17 Highways Work Programme

The updated Highways Work Programme is attached as Appendix H.

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 That the Committee consider the level of funding to be awarded to Hitchin Rotary Olympics – Appendix B

4.4 That the Committee consider the level of funding to be awarded to Strathmore Parents Association – Appendix C

4.5 That the Committee consider the level of funding to be awarded to Vaisakhi 2012 – Appendix D

4.6 That the Committee consider the level of funding to be awarded to YOPEY (Young People of the Year) 2012 – Appendix E.

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 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 2011/12.

6.2 The spreadsheet also details the pre-allocations carried forward from the previous financial year 2010/11 to the current financial year 2011/12.

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 at Appendix A.
- 9.3 That the Committee consider the level of funding to be awarded to Hitchin Rotary Olympics – Appendix B
- 9.4 That the Committee consider the level of funding to be awarded to Strathmore School Parents Association – Appendix C
- 9.5 That the Committee consider the level of funding to be awarded to Vaisakhi 2012 – Appendix D
- 9.6 That the Committee consider the level of funding to be awarded to YOPEY (Young People of the Year 2012) – Appendix E

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 – Hitchin Rotary Olympics
- 11.3 Appendix C – Strathmore School Parents Association
- 11.4 Appendix D - Vaisakhi 2012-02-21
- 11.5 Appendix E - YOPEY (Young Person of the Year 2012)
- 11.6 Appendix F - Hitchin Area Committee Work Plan 2011/2012
- 11.7 Appendix G – Highways Work Programme 2011/2012
- 11.8 Appendix H - NHDC Street Trading – Consent Streets

12. CONTACT OFFICERS

- 12.1 Margaret Bracey, Community Development Officer. Ext: 4830.
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- 12.2 Tim Neill, Accountancy Manager. Ext 4461
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13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

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