

**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 British Schools Museum**

Volunteers at the British Schools Museum have been honoured with a Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. The Museum has 150 volunteers welcoming 5,000 schoolchildren and an equal number of adult visitors to the museum. The volunteers are an integral part of the museum and to receive the award is a tremendous achievement and a great honour.

Her Majesty the Queen presented the award to the volunteers during her recent and very successful visit to Hitchin.

**3.2 Westmill Fun Club**

During the recent half term Westmill Fun Club have been able to provide lunch to the young people attending thanks to 'I heart Hitchin group - The Hub Church' organisation who have provided the lunches and volunteers. This has been very popular with increasing numbers attending. It is hoped that this will also take place during the six weeks school holidays.

The Fun Club have planned a number of activities over the summer holidays and are grateful to Hitchin Swimming Pool who offered a discount for the swimming session planned.

**3.3 Smartys Day Nursery**

The Nursery has now been registered at Companies House as a Company Limited by Guarantee and is in the process of registering with the

Charities Commission. With new Trustees in place, this will enable the Nursery to withdraw from Westmill Community Association, which it has come under for a number of years, and manage themselves.

Unfortunately the current Manager, who has been there a number of years and taken the group through all the changes, has resigned to take up a new role. The Trustees have appointed a new Manager and Smartys will continue to serve the community.

When all the legal work is complete there will be a celebration with staff, parents and friends and Members will be informed of the date.

#### **3.4 Oughton Children's Centre**

Oughton Primary School is having to find space for more children in the new term in September 2012, but unfortunately this means that the very successful Toy Library has had to move out of the classroom that they currently use.

Plans are being made to absorb the library, into the current Children's Centre space, but the Toy Library will not be as accessible as it is now for the families on Westmill. Longer term plans are being investigated by the Advisory Board sub committee for its future.

#### **3.5 Community Centres**

There will be a meeting of representatives from the Management Committees of North Herts District Community Centres on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> July, 2012, at St John's Community Centre, Hitchin at 7.30pm. These meetings take place a year and the representatives of the management committees find them very useful to discuss any issues that they have in common and share good practice.

Items on the agenda are Renewal of Community Centre leases and the Kier Harlow Compliance Contract.

#### **3.6 Hitchin Senior Citizens Welfare Committee**

The Annual General Meeting of the Senior Citizens Welfare Committee took place on Friday June 29<sup>th</sup> 2012. The Committee adopted a new Constitution updating their Objects in order to support organisations that provide activities for the elderly people of Hitchin and surrounding villages, for the future.

#### **3.7 Westmill Play Project**

The Westmill Play Project has obtained funding from Cllr Nigel Brooks' Locality Budget which means the project is secure until Christmas 2012. Steps will be taken to find the funding required, £3,100, for the Spring term 2013 but also for the future of the project.

#### **3.8 King George V Skate park**

The planned consultation, on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> June, re the Skate park improvements had to be cancelled due to the bad weather. A new date will be arranged and Members will be informed.

#### **3.9 Triangle Community Garden**

The Triangle Community Garden won the Great and Green Award at the recent Comet Community Awards evening. It was totally unexpected and a wonderful surprise.

The Garden also had a visit from the High Sherriff Arabella Stuart-Smith, who is a keen gardener and also known as 'Mrs Wheelbarrow' through her work with schools. She was very enthusiastic about the work of the Community Garden.

### 3.10 **Member School Surgeries**

The three senior schools have now been visited by Members for the last time this academic year.

The young people discussed a number of issues one being the county-arranged buses to and from school.

At Priory some buses run late which causes the pupils to be late for registration and also if pupils attend after school clubs they have a long time to wait before getting a public bus home. Also the cheaper fare card does not apply across county borders. The young people were advised that they should channel this, through the School as a whole, to the bus companies and also through their Governing body.

This information will also be passed to County Councillors and the Transport unit at County Hall.

The Boys School had 35 questionnaires completed, which will be collated, any issues addressed and Members kept informed / updated.

### 3.11 **Hitchin Area Work Programme**

The Hitchin Area Committee Work programme 2012/2013 is attached as Appendix B. The Committee are requested to consider any additional items.

### 3.12 **Highways Work Programme**

The updated Highways Work Programme is attached as Appendix C.

### 3.13 **Events 2012**

29<sup>th</sup> June – 29<sup>th</sup> July – Hitchin Festival

Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> July – Councillors Surgery in Market Place

Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> July – Hitchin Rotary Olympics

Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> July - Hitchin Hard Half Marathon

Saturday 14<sup>th</sup>/Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> July - Rhythms of the World

Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> August – Westmill Community Fun Day

## 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 a Grant Award to K Entertainers to provide entertainment and parties for the elderly in Care Homes and Centres, week commencing 26<sup>th</sup> November – 29<sup>th</sup> November. (as detailed in Appendix D)

4.4 That the Committee consider a Grant Award to Hitchin Floral Club to celebrate their anniversary by holding workshops to encourage new members to the Club. (as detailed in 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 2012/13.
- 6.2 The spreadsheet also details the pre-allocations carried forward from the previous financial year 2011/12 to the current financial year 2012/13.

## **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 consider a grant award of £500 to K Entertainers for the provision of entertainment and parties to the elderly in Care Homes and Centres - Appendix D

- 9.4 That the Committee consider a grant award of £500 to Hitchin Floral Club to enable them to hold workshops to encourage more members in their anniversary year – 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 Area Committee Work Plan 2012/2013
- 11.3 Appendix C – Highways Work Programme 2012/2013
- 11.4 Appendix D – K Entertainers Grant Application
- 11.5 Appendix E – Hitchin Floral Club

## **12. CONTACT OFFICERS**

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### **Contributors;**

- 12.2 Liz Green  
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## **13. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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