

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

AGENDA ITEM No.

TITLE OF REPORT : CHAMPION NEWS AND FINANCE REPORT

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

PORTFOLIO HOLDER COUNCILLOR TRICIA COWLEY

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 To advise the Committee on the current expenditure and balances of the Area
- 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 take place during the next few months.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Committee endorses the actions taken by the Community Development Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being.
- 2.2 That the Committee is asked to note the budgetary expenditure and balances carried forward from the Visioning, Development and Ward Budgets. Spreadsheet attached as Appendix A.
- 2.3 That the Committee considers awarding support funding to Walsworth Festival 2013 as set out in 8.6 of this report.
- 2.4 That the Committee considers awarding support funding to the Vaisakhi Festival 2013 as set out in 8.7 of this report.
- 2.5 That the Committee considers awarding support funding to the Young People of the Year Awards as set out in 8.8 of this report.
- 2.6 That the Committee considers awarding support funding to Rhythms of the World as set out in 8.9 of this report.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To ensure that the Committee are kept informed of the work of the Community Development 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 in the Grants procedure.
- 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.
- 3.4 Production of this report is a requirement of the 'Priorities for the District' in which the Community Development Officer is required to produce a formal report to the Area Committee 6 occasions per annum in line with the Civic Calendar.

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 elected 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 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 A Area Committee Budget Spreadsheet, which relates to the Area Committee budget balances for the current financial year 2012/13.
- 7.2 The spreadsheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial year 2011/12 including balances and past expenditure relating to the allocated and un-allocated Area Capital Visioning Budgets available to the Committee.
- 7.3 The current level of unallocated funds within the Committee's Central Area Grant Budget is £2,547.
- 7.4 The current levels of unallocated funds within the Committee's Ward Discretionary Budgets are:

Bearton Ward	£1,064
Highbury Ward	£500
Oughton Ward	£750
Priory Ward	£459
Walworth Ward	£1,439

7.5 The current level of unallocated funds within the Committee's MoU Budget is £2,610.

8. PROJECT/ACTIVITY/SCHEME DETAILS

8.1 R.I.S.E. - Relationships, Identity, Self Esteem/Belief/Awareness, Educated Choices

The School part of the R.I.S.E project started in January 2013, with all Year 9 pupils at The Priory School and there has been positive feedback, both from the staff and pupils. A fuller evaluation will be reported back at the end of the project in school.

The Community part of the project, to be delivered in Purwell and Westmill, will start after Easter 2013.

8.2 School Surgeries

The Girls School surgery took place on Thursday 7th February 2013, this time with the whole School Council. This worked very well, with representatives from each year group, who had talked with their peer group, and brought to the meeting a number of issues and comments raised.

These included the high incidence of graffiti around the area. It was said that if there was a dedicated graffiti wall, managed by the young people, this might work. This will be brought to the Voice of Hitchin Youth for investigating.

The Community Development Officer is working with the senior schools to identify a suitable date, as soon as possible, for surgeries next term, to ensure Members have time to arrange their diaries.

8.3 Triangle Residents Association

The Triangle Residents Association held their Annual General Meeting on Monday 4th February, 2013, when they reluctantly agreed to dissolve the Association, after twelve years of supporting the community. The small Committee had been actively trying to find new members, without success.

The remaining funds will be divided between the successful offshoot of the Association, the Triangle History Group and the equally successful Triangle Community Garden.

8.4 North Herts Minority Ethnic Forum

A meeting took place at the Forum on Thursday 31st January 2013. One issue discussed was the speeding on Lancaster Road/Lancaster Avenue.

The Community Development Officer is working with the Forum for the best day and time for these Surgeries to take place. Friday 1st March in the afternoon has been identified, time to be finalised. Members will be advised of this by email.

8.5 Bancroft Gardens

It is intended to apply for a Parks for People Lottery grant to renovate the Gardens. This is a lengthy process but can generate up to 80% of the funding for the works.

Contact has been made with the Heritage Lottery Fund for pre application advice and positive feedback has been received, that this location meets the criteria for a Parks for People application.

Currently a tender specification is being produced to appoint a firm of consultants to assist in the development of a stage one lottery application. The lottery has two dates when applications can be submitted, August and February. It is intended to develop

the stage one application this summer and submit the application in February 2014.

8.6 **Walsworth Festival**

Walsworth Festival takes place this year on Sunday May 19th. This is a very popular Community Festival which enables community groups to raise money for their activities. The Festival Committee put on Arena events and other displays to attract the public. The costs of putting on the Festival rises each year and these include hire of portaloos, insurance and safety measures. The Festival is weather dependant and some years they either break even or have a slight loss.

The Festival organisers do not request money on a yearly basis but occasionally request a grant to help them in a specific year to enable them to continue this worthwhile community event.

8.7 **Vaisakhi 2013**

The Vaisakhi Procession takes place on Saturday 13th April, 2013. This is a popular Procession, taking place through the streets of Hitchin, which is enjoyed by the public. Members have supported this procession in previous years as it is a favourite multi ethnic event in the Hitchin calendar.

The organisers have to hire a Traffic Management Company to arrange the rolling street closures the procession requires. This costs £3,500 and the event in total costs £6,600, including Public Liability Insurance.

8.8 **YOPEY –Young Person of the Year Award**

This Hertfordshire contest will once again include Hitchin as it did last year. There is a 6 month campaign to recognise a young unsung hero or heroes in the area. The organisers work closely with the local schools and representatives of Hitchin Girls School were hosts at the 2012 Award ceremony.

The funding requested from Hitchin Area Committee will be spent on working with schools and organisations in Hitchin to identify local unsung young role models, using local newspapers, internet and local radio to advertise the campaign. They also have teaching resources that can be used in schools to encourage nominations.

8.9 **Rhythms of the World 2013**

As the Festival organisers are not able to use the Priory for the 2013 Festival and they have not been able to find a suitable space for this year's Festival, they have decided to defer the Festival until 2014. They plan instead to have a series of events, to keep the Rhythms momentum going through out 2013 Part of these events will be a Funday in the Market Place, Hitchin, on Sunday 14th July 2013, which is the traditional Rhythms weekend.

They plan to have one stage which will be the Icehouse Stage, which was a new but successful venture in 2012, where young musicians/singers/dancers etc, including the winners of the Voice of Hitchin Youth Talent Competition, performed. They will also have street performers, clowns, face painting, petting zoo and much more. all free of charge.

Although ROTW have reserves of £40,000 the cost of putting on a full scale festival has increased to around £300,000 and in order to be able to have a Festival in 2014, the Trustees feel unable to release any of the reserve in 2013.

As the Festival will be free and accessible to all they need to secure grant funding to pay for the hire of the stage, first aid and other expenses. This Family Funday in the centre of Hitchin will give the town a taste of Rhythms and enable them to continue to

engage with the local community but also to recruit new volunteers who could bring fresh ideas and energy to the Rhythms family. The funday will also contribute to the vibrancy of Hitchin, during the month long Hitchin Festival.

8.10 **Hitchin Area Update**

The Hitchin Area Update, including Highways Projects, is attached as Appendix B. This is a working document and amendments can be made at meetings or emailing the Community Development Officer.

8.11 **Diary Dates 2013**

Friday 29th March – Good Friday Walk of Witness
Saturday 6th April – Councillors Surgery in Market Place
Saturday 6th April - Vintage Taste in Market Place
Saturday 13th April – Vaisakhi Procession
Saturday 4th May – Councillors surgery in Market Place
Saturday 1st June – Councillors surgery in Market Place
Sunday 9th June – Hitchin Hard Half Marathon
Saturday 15th June – Rotary Community Health Day
Monday 24th June Hitchin Festival launch night

8.12 **Highways Matters**

It is proposed 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.

Members attention is drawn to Appendix C Area Committee Work Programme, which lists and tracks the progress of joint funded Highways schemes or such proposals raised by the Committee.

New proposals will be logged on the form and forwarded to the respective Herts County Councillor for consideration.

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 includes discretionary grant aid/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 has delegated powers to administer funds from the budgets described.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 In the past few years there has been no inflationary allowance to the main Area Committee Budget and the 2012/13 baseline budget has stayed the same as the previous year.

- 10.2 The former MoU Budget is subject to a 7.1% reduction each year through to financial year 2015/16.

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 that may arise.

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 Development 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 A – Annual Grant and Development Discretionary Budget Update
- 15.2 Appendix B – Hitchin Area Update 2012/2013
- 15.3 Appendix C - Grant Report for Walsworth Festival 2013
- 15.4 Appendix D - Grant Report for Vaisakhi 2013
- 15.5 Appendix E - Grant Report for YOPEY 2013
- 15.6 Appendix F - Grant Report for Rhythms of the World 2013

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17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

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