

**TITLE OF REPORT : CHAMPION NEWS AND FINANCE REPORT****REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES****1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 To advise the Committee on the current expenditure and balances of the Area Committee.
- 1.2 To bring to the Committee's attention details of recent requests received for Area Committee 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 Herts Young Carers Hitchin Group grant application to follow.
- 2.4 That the Committee endorses the action taken by the Chair and Vice Chair of Hitchin Area Committee, under their discretionary powers, to fast track the sum of £200 to Hertfordshire Cricket Board, for their Table Cricket project in Hitchin, as set out in 8.2.
- 2.5 That the Committee notes that Priory Ward Members have part funded a dog bin in St Ippolyts.

**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 Grant 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 2013/14.

7.2 The spreadsheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial year 2012/13 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 £21,480

7.4 The current levels of **unallocated** funds within the Committee's Ward Discretionary Budgets are:

Bearton	£1,500
Highbury	£1,500
Oughton	£1,000
Priory	£ 541
Walsworth	£1,500

## **8. PROJECT/ACTIVITY/SCHEME DETAILS**

### **8.1 NHMEF Surgery**

The Surgery took place on 7<sup>th</sup> June with two Members present. It was agreed to continue the surgeries monthly, on the first Friday of the month, but to be held at the new time of 3pm. The next surgery will take place on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> July.

One issue raised at the surgery was the request for single yellow lines on Strathmore Avenue because of commuter parking. This causes difficulties for residents coming out of their drives, because of limited sight lines. It was added that Stormont Road and Water Lane had similar issues.

### **8.2 Table Cricket**

Hertfordshire Cricket Board is developing a Table Cricket programme for young people and adults with a physical or learning disability in Hitchin. The Board expects to have up to 120 young people and adults benefiting in Year 1 of the programme.

The project will be based at North Herts College in Hitchin and they have secured partnership funding for the development of staff to run the courses.

The initiative will take place October – December 2013. The Hitchin teams will be able to take part in games with groups from other Colleges in a proposed Community League.

The programme is split into three sections:-

- College Coaching and Training Programme
- Delivery of College games
- Delivery of Table Cricket Community League

The Chair and Vice Chair, under their discretionary powers, agreed to fast track the requested £200 towards the project. The applicants will be invited to a future Hitchin Area Committee meeting to update Members on the delivery of the project.

### **8.3 Edible Community Garden**

A piece of waste land at North Place, Hitchin, has been identified by North Herts Homes as suitable for the first Edible Hitchin Community Garden. The land is currently being landscaped by a partnership of organisations including Community Service.

Once the area has been cleared and ready to plant, the project will involve local families and schools.

### **8.4 Westmill Community Centre**

The project to rebuild Westmill Community Centre under the John Barker Place regeneration plans continues, with the Community Centre Management Committee commenting upon revised draft plans at their recent meeting. Flyers are being drafted, for delivery around the area, regarding a consultation as soon as can be arranged.

### **8.5 Herts Young Carers Hitchin Group**

Changes have taken place with regard to the governance of Herts Young Carers so the Hitchin group after discussion about the future, have formed a Committee, adopted a Constitution and opened a Bank Account. They then want to consult with the young carers about how they wish to go forward and what they would like from their Club.

It may be, that with the Hitchin group as a model, other groups may be set up within the district.

#### **8.6 Hitchin Senior Citizens Welfare Committee**

The Committee held their Annual General Meeting on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> June. The results of the recent survey, conducted to establish what activities 50+ were looking for were discussed.

The Committee agreed that they would take up the offer of having a website so that information about clubs and activities were available Online. The Committee had a volunteer willing to do this.

#### **8.7 Hitchin Hard Half Marathon**

The second Hard Half Marathon took place on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> June and again was very successful. This year there was also a Fun Run which raised £4,000 for Cancer Hair Care.

#### **8.8 Hitchin Health Awareness Day**

The annual awareness Day took place on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> June and was very busy. In addition to the inflatable bowel, which was present last year day, there was also an inflatable lung.

#### **8.9 Voice of Hitchin Youth**

Unfortunately the Voice had to cancel their Talent Competition due to lack of entries.

They have now stopped meeting until after the Summer holidays. A number of members are leaving, moving onto College/University, so The Voice will be seeking new members in September and will be holding their Annual General Meeting.

The new Committee will present to the Area Committee in January 2014 with their plans for the year.

#### **8.10 Hitchin Area Update**

The Hitchin Area Update, including Highways Projects, is attached as Appendix B. This is a working document and includes possible funding through Section 106/UU's. Amendments or additions can be made at meetings or emailing the Community Development Officer.

### **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 2013/14 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 1<sup>st</sup> October 2010, a major piece of legislation. The Act also created a new Public Sector Equality Duty, which came into force on the 5<sup>th</sup> 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 2013/2014.  
15.3 Appendix C - Herts Young Carers Hitchin group grant application to follow.

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**17. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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