

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 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 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, as set out in 8.7 of this report.
- 2.4 That the Committee considers awarding support funding to Box Cleva, as set out in 8.8 of this report.
- 2.5 That the Committee considers awarding support funding to Toque Tambor, as set out in 8.9 of this report.
- 2.6 That the Committee note that Oughton Ward Members funded Westmill Community Association from their Ward budget.
- 2.7 That the Committee considers awarding support funding in relation to any potential Highways schemes as proposed and discussed under section 8.12 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.

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 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 £18,428

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

Bearton Ward	£1,176
Highbury Ward	£1,500
Oughton Ward	£850
Priory Ward	£800
Walworth Ward	£1,382

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

8. PROJECT/ACTIVITY/SCHEME DETAILS

8.1 Primary Schools Fair – 'Fair in the Square'

This popular event is planned to take place again on Saturday 10th May 2014. Most of the Infant and Junior Schools in Hitchin take part each year and it is deemed to be a very successful fundraising event for the Schools. It also promotes awareness of the schools available in Hitchin and positive comments are made by the public attending, about the schools all working together in staging such a successful event.

8.2 NHMEF Councillors Surgery

A surgery will take place at the North Herts Minority Ethnic Forum on Friday 10th January 2014 at 3pm. Members are requested of their availability for this surgery and to notify the Community Development Officer if they are able to attend.

8.3 Westmill Community Centre and John Barker Place re development

The formal consultation event for the proposed new Community Centre and the re development of John Barker Place, took place on Wednesday 20th November 2013. The Architects for both projects were present as well as representatives from NHDC and NHH. The consultation was well attended and positive comments were made by those attending re the designs of both the proposed new Community Centre and the housing and shops. Most of the comments said that the new Centre, including a youth wing will bring the community of Westmill together in a positive way.

8.4 Girls Schools Surgery

The surgery in the Girls School was attended by two Members, who were very impressed with the quality of the questions raised, which covered issues both nationally and locally.

The increase in GSCE appeals was a big concern for some of the pupils, because of the changes to the grading. It was suggested they contact their Member of Parliament and the County Councillor for Education at Herts County Council.

The need for local housing was also discussed and they all agreed that it was important that any new housing development came with the correct level of local services and infrastructure required for the new communities created, for example transport and schools. They also said that it was important to retain parks and open spaces. They added Hitchin was a lovely town.

8.5 Bike Rack at Woodside Car Park

The bike rack proposed for Woodside Car Park has been purchased and awaiting delivery. Once received the rack will be installed and should be in place before the end of the year. The budget for this was previously allocated within the Area Committee budget and Members will be kept informed of progress.

8.6 **Hitchin Health Awareness Day**

Planning has started for the Health Awareness Day in Hitchin on Saturday 7th June 2014. The event has now been renamed 'Health and Wellbeing Day'.

8.7 **Walsworth Festival**

This popular community Festival will take place on Sunday 18th May 2014. New members of the Event Committee are making the necessary arrangements, which are somewhat more complicated this time owing to the fact that a new three year Premises Licence has to be applied for. This process should be completed before the end of the year and all being well the new Licence should be granted in the New Year, well in time for the Festival in May.

The Festival Committee is seeking financial support from the Area Committee to assist with the costs relating to the staging of the annual event, including event insurance & supply of Portaloos.

8.8 **Box Cleva**

This group owes its origins to a former community initiative programme of Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, which ran several highly successful pilot schemes during 2010.

Following their earlier success the group commenced full operations in February 2011, funded by Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, as well as a number of Local Authority Community Action Grants including a recent award of £1k from the NH JAG group.

The group currently operates as a charitable (membership) association with its own Management Committee (Board) which is in full control of its operations and activities.

Box Cleva is a sporting and educational youth initiative centred on the sport of amateur boxing, based on the same protocols that an amateur boxer would take whilst training, with the exception of sparring, this is an absolutely no contact initiative.

The group's regular project format is to operate a series of 40 week (term) sessions for children aged 7 – 15 with positive outcomes and ways forward for all those taking part.

The sessions are weekly and are carried out by some of the very best trainers in the country. All coaches are fully qualified by the Amateur Boxing Association of England (ABA) and are Enhanced CRB checked, as well as holding first aid certificates.

Each session lasts approximately 1.5 hours and instils discipline, respect, perseverance, fair-play and fitness, within a safe and controlled environment. Healthy Eating sessions and drugs Awareness sessions are carried out in every programme.

Many of the children that partake are referred from their schools and other agencies, including the Police and ASB Officers within Local Authorities. Most of these children will be having behavioural problems, playing truant and getting into trouble generally.

The scheme's overall aim is to provide positive male role models within the community.

The group has achieved a high level of success with their programmes, including reducing anti-social behaviour in specific areas where they operate by 39%. Last year the scheme was awarded Silver in the Community Improvement & Efficiency Awards 2012.

The project has been delivered very successfully in Letchworth for the past year and part funding has already been received to run the same project in the Hitchin area.

Similar programmes have also been or are currently being delivered in other towns and areas within the County; namely St Albans, Cheshunt, South Oxhey & Stevenage.

The Letchworth project uses a local school as a venue to deliver the weekly based session, with project coordinators transporting in the specialist equipment required.

However, with regards to a base in Hitchin, a more suitable venue has been found at a local boxing club gym within the town and it is hoped that this will also provide a clear succession pathway and support mechanisms for those attending once the formal sessions end.

At the end of each the project, an awards evening is held with invitations going out to representatives from each of the funding providers as well as the local press.

8.9 Toque Tambor Update

At the last Area Committee meeting on 12th November 2013, the Members requested more information on the Toque Tambor funding application, before making a decision.

Clarification was required as to the purpose of the request for funding and of the charitable status of the group. The group are a charitable organisation with a Constitution whose stated aims/objects are:

'To advance and promote the education of public arts with a view to developing good relations between people of different ethnic groups, ages and abilities in Hertfordshire and the surrounding area.'

The group is not registered with the Charity Commission but operates within the vein of larger charitable groups in that; Membership of Toque Tambor is open to any person interested in furthering the above objects. Current weekly subscription fees are £7 a week for employed, £5 a week for unemployed or young people and any excess balance in income is put back into the organisation to further the objects.

The funding support requested is for the staging and delivery of a workshop and performances designed primarily to attract new members and increase participation by targeting people of 14 years and upwards to take part and get involved in playing carnival/Brazilian music. Overall they will have the chance to learn a new musical discipline in a fun environment and represent Hitchin at other events and performances in a vibrant explosion of music colour and dance.

The total cost for the initiative is £3,500 broken down as Publicity £250, Performance with a professional musician fees £1,250, costumes creation £1,000 and additional instruments £1,000.

Other sources of funding, for the balance, will be achieved through local fundraising, external funding sources and increased membership.

8.10 Hitchin Area Update & Highways Matters

The Hitchin Area Update is attached as Appendix B. (Including Highways Matters)

This is a working document and amendments can be made at each committee meeting or by emailing the Community Development Officer.

A section entitled ' Highways Matters ' is included within all the Area Champions' News Reports for each committee, designed primarily to facilitate debate and enable appropriate feedback on any of the proposed or listed schemes. This is to ensure that communication remains effective between district & county.

Any new proposals or revised schemes will be forwarded to the respective Herts County Councillor for consideration who will in turn report back and advise the Committee accordingly.

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 2013/2014
- 15.3 Appendix C – Grant Report for Box Cleve
- 15.4 Appendix D – Grant Report for Walsworth Festival
- 15.5 Appendix E – Grant Report for Toque Tambor

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17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

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