

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 the Vaisakhi Festival as set out in 8.1 of this report.
- 2.4 That the Committee considers awarding support funding to Home-Start as set out in 8.6 of this report.
- 2.5 That the Committee considers awarding support funding to Oughton Children's Centre as set out in 8.10 of this report.
- 2.6 That the Committee considers awarding funding to North Herts Minority Ethnic Forum as set out in 8.8 of this report.
- 2.7 That the Committee considers awarding funding to Hitchin Town Centre Initiative as in 8.11 of this report.
- 2.8 That the Committee considers awarding the Hitchin Boys School High Jump Project, through Stevenage and North Herts Athletics Club, as set out in 8.9 of this report.

- 2.9 That the Committee considers awarding funding to Soundbase, as set out in 8.12 of this report.
- 2.10 That the Committee note that Walsworth Ward Members funded Walsworth Festival from their Ward budget.
- 2.11 That the Committee note that Oughton Ward Members funded Westmill Community Association from their Ward budget.
- 2.12 That the Committee note that Bearton Ward Members funded advertising a Traffic Regulation Order and signage for a disabled bay in Lancaster Road.
- 2.13 That the Committee note that Highbury Ward Members funded the installation of 6 bollards in Tilehouse Street.
- 2.14 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.
- 2.15 That the Committee considers the commitment of unallocated funds within the Central Area Grants budget, currently £16,950, re any potential future projects prior to the end of the financial year.

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 £16,950
- 7.4 The current levels of unallocated funds within the Committee's Ward Discretionary Budgets are:

Bearton Ward	£276
Highbury Ward	£345
Oughton Ward	£470
Priory Ward	£800
Walworth Ward	£1,291

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

8. PROJECT/ACTIVITY/SCHEME DETAILS

8.1. Vaisakhi 2014

The 2014 Vaisakhi Festival, takes place on Saturday 19th April, and the Procession will follow its usual route from the Gurdwara in Wilbury Way, at approximately 1pm, via Grove Road, Nightingale Road, Bancroft, Sun Street, Bridge Street, Queen Street, Hermitage Road, returning through Bancroft, Nightingale Road, Grove Road and arriving at the Gurdwara in Wilbury Way at approximately 4.15pm.

This is a very popular colourful, multi cultural procession, through the streets of Hitchin. The organisers of the Vaisakhi Festival have to meet a number of strategic requirements, for example employing a Traffic Management company to manage the ongoing road closures required and public liability insurance amongst other expenses. The total cost of the Festival is £7,900 and the organisers are requesting a grant from Hitchin Area Committee towards these costs.

8.2 NHMEF Councillors Surgery

A number of issues were raised at the Surgery at North Herts Minority Ethnic Forum, on Friday 10th January 2014, and these are being dealt with by the Councillors attending and supported the Community Development Officer. The next surgery is Friday 4th April from 3pm – 3.30pm.

Members are asked to note for their availability for this surgery and to notify the Community Development Officer if they are able to attend.

8.3 **K Entertainers**

The Entertainers' organisers have written to thank the Area Committee for their grant for the 2013 Christmas Shows. Their total expenditure for the Christmas Show 2013, was £8,839.58. They have also invited members to attend a re run of the Christmas Show with a buffet on March 1st 2014. If any Members wish to attend please let the Community Development Officer know.

8.4 **Grant update Presentations**

Committee Members, at the meeting on 7th January 2014, requested a presentation from groups that had previously received grant funding, to enable the Committee to be updated on the groups' progress.

Attached as Appendix J is a list of grants given in the last three years, for Members to decide which organisations they would like to return.

8.5 **Charlton Society**

Charlton Society held their Annual General Meeting on Sunday 16th February, 2014. One of the items on the agenda, was agreeing a slight change to the Society's Constitution, in order to meet one of the requirements of the funding application to Luton Airport Community Fund, for the Bessemer Village Commemorative Village signs. Further information and update may be available following the AGM.

8.6 **Home-Start**

Home-Start is a voluntary organisation that supports disadvantaged vulnerable families living locally. Their aim is to educate and encourage engagement, not just within a family group, but within a range of local community services and partners.

They are seeking Hitchin Area Committee funding for a Healthy Lifestyle project, which is planned to run for 8 weeks during the summer months, in order for older family siblings to have the opportunity to join the family group. The first part of the project, funded by Oughton Children's Centre, takes place February, March and April, 2014.

Many of the families that Home-Start work with live on Westmill and the project will run from Westmill Community Centre on a Thursdays 10am – 12pm. Every family referred to the Family group will receive an initial home visit and home-start publicity leaflets. Families will pay £1 each session they attend.

8.7 **Box Clewa**

The first Box Clewa session at the gym in Hitchin took place on Thursday 6th February with 7 young people attending. They expect an increase on the 13th February and to reach the maximum (15) the following week. They also intend to continue through February half term due to the programme starting later.

8.8 **North Herts Minority Ethnic Forum**

North Herts Minority Ethnic Forum is an umbrella organisation for local black and minority ethnic communities (BME) and provides a variety of services to help improve the quality of life of local BME people.

It provides various skill development courses (e.g. IT, ESOL, numeracy, literacy, job training etc.) to enhance their skills and life chances and also provides information, advice and guidance on health, housing, benefit, education, training and various other matters. In addition they deliver various educational support programmes such as Saturday School, Homework Club, Mentoring and extra curriculum services to the children and young people.

The Forum is requesting funding to provide additional services to children and young people, as a significant number come from vulnerable family backgrounds. The families particularly struggle during the school holidays and have requested activities. The Forum consulted the parents and are providing a programme of educational visits and day trips to various interesting places, which include a day trip to Oxford University, the War Museum at Duxford and a seaside trip. The total cost of the three trips which includes coach hire and tickets is £1,205. and the Forum is seeking support from Hitchin Area Committee towards these trips.

8.9 Hitchin Boys School High Jump Project

Amongst other sports tuition and coaching, the Stevenage and North Herts Athletics Club provides core skills training in the movement patterns and techniques required for sprint hurdles and high jump for 11-14 year olds from Hitchin Senior Schools, interested in learning the correct techniques to run, hurdle and jump.

Initially the it is planned to focus on hurdles and high jump in a Sports Hall setting. Two taster sessions have already been delivered with 25, 11 -14 year olds from the three Hitchin Schools expressed an interest.

The funding sought from Hitchin Area Committee is for a new High Jump bed. The current one is very old and getting dangerous to use. The club has secured some funding to go towards this and this seeking £1,000 from the Area Committee.

8.10 Oughton Children's Centre

Oughton Children's Centre is a recognised Sure Start Children's Centre and provides a range of services for children and their families from pregnancy right through to when a child goes into Reception Class at Primary School.

Services are aimed at providing a child's health and well being, including readiness for school and the families economic well being through education and employment.

The Centre runs courses and workshops every day of the week including Saturdays. The services range from Job Centre Plus to Parenting classes and creative/messy play.

The Children's Centre would like to install a buggy park/shelter for their parents so that buggies can remain safe and dry. They have requested funding from their County Councillor's locality budget towards the cost and he has also suggested that they seek funding from Hitchin Area Committee..

8.11 Hitchin Town Centre Initiative

Hitchin Town Centre Initiative is a registered (not for profit) Company Limited by Guarantee, with an aim is to make Hitchin Town Centre a vibrant Centre for businesses, shoppers and families.

The Initiative wishes to purchase 8 gazebos for use on the Market Place. These gazebos will be made available for use by local charitable / community organisations to not only promote the activities of the organisation but also to enable them to raise much needed funds. The Initiative seeks a funding contribution from Hitchin Area Committee in order to provide this local community resource.

8.12 **Sound Base**

Sound Base Studios Trust engages and educates hard to reach young people through creative media. The project, for which they are seeking funding, will benefit approximately 100 young people aged 13 – 24.

The Trust wishes to offer it's excellent studio/recording facilities free of charge to local young people to explore their artistic talents through vocals, instruments, rapping, DJs, film makings etc.

It is hoped that those attending will develop in self confidence, via working and learning as a team. It is recognised that it is hard for young people to find such facilities and opportunities of this nature locally, to record songs / videos and use social media safely to promote their talents.

8.13 **Diary Dates**

Friday 29th March – The Blue Light Experience - Market Place
Friday 18th April – Good Friday Walk of Witness
Saturday 19th April – Vaisakhi
Saturday 10th May – Joint Primary Schools Fair – Market Place
Sunday 18th May – Walsworth Festival on Walsworth Common
Saturday 24th May – Fairtrade Day – Market Place
Saturday 7th June – Health and Wellbeing Day
Saturday 21st June – British Schools Summer Fair
Sunday 22nd June – Hitchin Hard Half Marathon
Friday 27th June – Hitchin Festival begins
Saturday 28th June – Royal British Legion - Armed Forces Day
Saturday 12th July – St Mary's Summer Fair
Sunday 27th July – Hitchin Festival end

8.14 **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 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 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 Vaisakhi
- 15.4 Appendix D – Grant Report for Home-Start
- 15.5 Appendix E – Grant Report for Oughton Children’s Centre
- 15.6 Appendix F - Grant Report for North Herts Minority Ethnic Forum
- 15.7 Appendix G - Grant Report for Hitchin Town Centre Initiative
- 15.8 Appendix H - Grant Report for Hitchin Boys School High Jump project
- 15.9 Appendix I - Grant Report for Soundbase
- 15.10 Appendix J - Grants previously awarded by the Hitchin Committee.

16. CONTACT OFFICERS

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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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