

TITLE OF REPORT: GRANT APPLICATIONS AND COMMUNITY UPDATE

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY & 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 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 The Committee is asked to note the budgetary expenditure, balances and carry forwards from the Development, Visioning and Ward Budgets as set out in Appendix A.
- 2.2 That the Committee considers grant funding of £620 towards start up costs for the American Flag Football Community Project (as outlined in 8.2 and Appendix B).
- 2.3 That the Committee considers grant funding of £910 to cover venue hire costs for the Bancroft Project (as outlined in 8.3 and Appendix C).
- 2.4 That the Committee considers grant funding of £750 towards marketing and publicity costs for the Association of Traditional Shotokan Karate (as outlined in 8.4 and Appendix D).
- 2.5 That the Committee considers grant funding of £1500 to The Early Days Play Group who are requesting grant funding towards the creation of an outdoor play area. (as outlined in 8.5 and Appendix E).
- 2.6 That the Committee considers grant funding of £200 as one fifth of the cost towards a project for North Herts Samaritans to install CCTV at their HQ in Nuns Close, Hitchin. (as outlined in 8.6 and Appendix F).
- 2.7 That the Committee considers grant funding of £500 towards the marketing and publicity costs to the Hitchin Society for Heritage Open Days (as outlined in 8.7 and Appendix G)
- 2.8 That the Committee considers grant funding of £1500 (being the maximum amount the committee can award) to the Hitchin Quaker Meeting towards refurbishment and repair

of two stretches of boundary walls to the Meeting House grounds. (as outlined in 8.8 and Appendix H).

- 2.9 That the Committee considers grant funding of £1000 to Hot House Dance towards the Move Hitchin event on 6th July 2014. (as outlined in in 8.9 and Appendix I)
- 2.10 That the Committee notes that an officer update regarding the position on grant funding of £1,500 to the Charlton Society will be provided at the meeting.
- 2.11 That the Committee considers awarding support funding in relation to any potential Highways schemes as proposed and discussed under section 8.10 of this report.
- 2.12 That the Committee endorses the actions taken by the Community Development Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being for Hitchin.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To ensure the Committee is 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 the Grants policy.
- 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 on four 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 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 2014/15.
- 7.2 The spreadsheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial years 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 Area Committee's 2014/15 Area Grant Budget is **£24,800**
- 7.4 There are no funds within the Area Committee's 2013/14 Area Grant Budget that remain uncommitted.
- 7.5 The current level of unallocated funds within the Area Committee's MoU Budget is **£280.00**

8. PROJECT/ ACTIVITY/ SCHEME DETAILS

8.2 American Flag Football Community Project

Grant Funding of £620 is requested to assist in the cost of equipment and hire of an all season pitch for training sessions. As this is a new project in the process of setting up this group requires initial funding to help with start up costs.

The project aims to provide training in American Football to young people in the Hitchin area in order to engage them in a worthy pastime / sport and potentially diverting them from entering into forms of anti social behaviour.

Young people with behavioural difficulties or considered to be in danger of offending will be engaged and recruited to take part. The group has invested approximately £1,000 of its own funds to purchase most of the equipment needed.

However, in order to keep the cost of each session to an absolute minimum project organisers are requesting grant funding to cover the initial cost of hiring the all season pitch based at North Herts College, Hitchin Site. Primarily this is in order to build up numbers needed for the sessions to remain sustainable.

The grant report for this project is outlined in Appendix B.

8.3 Bancroft Project

The Bancroft project for homeless people is a local service currently providing a Sunday lunch and hot drinks to the homeless and disadvantaged people of Hitchin and North Herts.

The project also provides a 'family' fellowship in a friendly and homely atmosphere, providing help for the 'rough sleepers' through the provision of small packs of necessities. It also provides sports mentoring, counselling support, information advice and guidance on benefit, housing & employment matters.

The Sunday Lunch takes place at the Bancroft Hall, in Hitchin. Other project activities are currently held at the community resource centre of the North Hertfordshire Minority Ethnic Forum and the sports activities take place at Hitchin Town Football Club venues.

The project has a very small amount of funding and is currently at the risk of closing if no further funds are raised / secured.

Most of the project's fund raising derives from public donations and the project has no other income for this service.

Cost of hiring Bancroft Hall for 12 months - Hall hire charges @17.50 p/hour x 2 hours p/week x 26 weeks = £910.00

The grant report for this project is outlined in Appendix C.

8.4 **Association of Traditional Shotokan Karate**

This is a project to actively promote traditional martial arts to people of all ages with disabilities, within mainstream clubs. It is designed to open up the benefits of self esteem and confidence to people that are normally excluded from mainstream activities.

The Association of Traditional Shotokan Karate is a not for profit organisation. The purpose of the project is to help all people access an activity that helps give self esteem and confidence.

The group is requesting £1,500 grant funding for marketing and publicity costs for two classes, one in Hitchin and the other based in Letchworth. The Letchworth Area Committee will also be asked to consider funding 50% of these costs.

The grant report for this project is outlined in Appendix D.

8.5 **Early Days Play Group**

The Early Days Play Group are requesting £1,500 of grant funding to help towards the creation of an imaginative, stimulating and safe outdoor play area, to maximise early years learning through active play.

Early Days Playgroup is a registered charity and the main purpose in the provision of such an area is to counteract the fact that a high percentage of children live in properties without gardens. The Play Group would therefore like the enhanced outdoor area to provide an opportunity for children at the play group sessions to access outside play in a supervised and safe environment.

The group has been continually fundraising towards the scheme and has so far raised £1,500 too. The group is also in the process of seeking permission from HCC, which is the landowner, to situate the play area in the garden adjacent to the Play Group's building.

If members are minded to make a grant award to this scheme, they may wish to consider making an 'In Principle' award and subject to the group receiving the necessary approvals from HCC for the scheme to go ahead, plus that the group secures the remaining funding required to complete the project. The grant if approved

would only be paid once the relevant conditions have been met, and payment authorised by the Head of Policy and Community Services on the committee's behalf.

The grant report for this project is outlined in Appendix E.

8.6 **North Herts Samaritans**

North Herts Samaritans are requesting £1000 funding towards installation of Close Circuit Television for their HQ premises in Hitchin. This is required in order to monitor face to face interviews within the premises, as well as improved security to the building at the front and rear entrances.

As the services provided covers the whole of the district the four other Area Committees will also be asked to consider contributing one fifth of the funding required equating to £200 from each Committee.

The grant report for this project is outlined in Appendix F.

8.7 **Hitchin Society**

The Hitchin Society are requesting £500 grant funding towards the cost of publicity materials to market the Heritage Open Days in the Town. The Society campaigns for the best of the past to be protected and enhanced for future generations to enjoy. It provides a programme of meetings with guest speakers and newsletters. It is the local organiser for the national initiative of Heritage Open Days.

The grant is to assist with promotion and advertising Heritage Open Days, a National event that takes place from Thursday 11-14 September 2014. Last year 16 venues were open including The Biggin, The British Schools Museum, St Saviour's Almshouses and The Triangle Community Garden and there were two guided walks in Hitchin.

This event will promote partnerships with local organisations and museums by opening venues and arranging walks for residents and visitors to enjoy during Heritage Open Days. It will be widely advertised to the local community by means of Hertfordshire Life, The Comet, Letchworth Arts and Leisure Group, Hitchin Society's website and members' newsletter plus other local websites. Nationally Heritage Open Day's website: www.heritageopendays.org.uk

Leaflets listing all venues / walks will be available and posters displayed. The group will also have stalls on Hitchin Market Square on Saturday 16 August.

The grant report for this project is outlined in Appendix G

8.8 **Hitchin Quaker Meeting**

The Quaker Meeting management group is seeking grant funding of £3,000 towards building works to repair and refurbish two stretches of boundary walls to the Meeting House grounds.

It is thought that the majority of these stretches of wall were probably constructed in the 19th century and are in need of re-pointing and replacement of spalled bricks and settlement cracks; this requires specialist contractors experienced in this work. One stretch of wall borders a pedestrian pavement in Bedford Road, the other overlooks the Hitchin Christian Centre's driveway used by church members and users of a Nursery.

The group has a duty of care to ensure that the perimeter walls remain safe to those passing or driving by. The walls also have some historic importance as they enclose the Quaker Burial Ground, which contains a number of burials and now the site of the

present Meeting House. A small number of bricks are dated as far back as the 1720s and, it is believed, may have been recycled from previous historic Meeting Houses in Hitchin.

The Meeting House is hired as a community facility for the Town and hosts a wide range of groups such as Friends of the Earth, Hitchin Counselling Service, Herts Young Homeless Group, Circles of Support, SUBUD, various yoga groups, Lairage Ladies, Hitchin Language Centre (past), U3A (past); occasional use by Samaritans and Hitchin Historical Society.

The Meeting House is open in September as part of the open buildings weekend. The grounds of the building are also a valuable green space and members of the public sometimes sit in the grounds for rest and peace.

The total cost of the refurbishment has been costed at £74,000. The Hitchin Quaker Meeting will be contributing £8,000 from their own funds and any outstanding amounts will be underwritten by the Hertford & Hitchin Quaker Area Meeting.

The grant report for this project is outlined in Appendix H

8.9 **Hot House Dance – Move Hitchin**

Hot House Dance is requesting £1000 Grant Funding towards the cost of putting on an event called MOVE HITCHIN. The event aims to celebrate the creative wealth of Hitchin through showcasing innovative and imaginative dance responding to the landscape/architecture and people within this diverse town. The limited cultural infrastructure in Hitchin and North Hertfordshire leads many locally based performance artists to work outside of the local area.

The project aims to address this and celebrate local artists by providing a platform to showcase young, emergent and local talent. It also seeks to connect with the wellbeing / healthy living agenda and support / provide and inspire local people to consider the arts as an enjoyable way to stay fit and healthy.

MOVE HITCHIN more specifically aims to engage 30 individuals aged 7-80 years old with a desire to dance, a choreographer and a local music group who will all directly benefit from the activity. Wider engagement, through public attendance specifically for this part of the programme is likely to reach around 200-300 people. The entire day will hopefully see viewing figures of between 2000 - 3000 people (across the 5 hours). MOVE HITCHIN will be part of the Hitchin Festival, and of a wider Arts Council England funded activity Big Dance. The projects have also achieved additional funding from Hertfordshire County Council and Arts Council England.

This funding will support the participatory element of the event and will allow Hot House Dance to offer free workshops to the public on the day by covering the costs of the workshop leaders and to provide a stage as well as a participatory installation for the entire family.

The grant report for this project is outlined in Appendix I

8.10 **Highways Matters**

It was agreed that a section entitled 'Highways Matters' is included within the Area Grant applications and Community Update Report (Appendix J) for each Committee cycle to facilitate debate and enable appropriate feedback on any of the proposed or listed schemes.

Any new proposals 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 include discretionary grant 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 2014/15 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.
- 10.3 Appendix A provides the detailed budget position for the Committee.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no 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. There are no pertinent risk implications for the Authority associated with any items within this report.

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 Paragraph 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 Hitchin Area Committee Budget Report 2014/15
- 15.2 Appendix B American Flag Football Community Project – Grant Report
- 15.3 Appendix C The Bancroft Project – Grant Report
- 15.4 Appendix D Association of Traditional Shotokan Karate – Grant Report
- 15.5 Appendix E The Early Days Play Group – Grant Report
- 15.6 Appendix F The North Herts Samaritans – Grant Report
- 15.7 Appendix G Hitchin Society – Grant Report
- 15.8 Appendix H Hitchin Quaker Meeting – Grant Report
- 15.9 Appendix I Hot House Dance – Grant Report
- 15.10 Appendix J Area Committee Summary Update 2014 - 2015

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17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

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