

TITLE OF REPORT: GRANT APPLICATIONS & 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 The Committee considers grant funding of £1000 towards the cost of road traffic management for the Vaisakhi procession (as presented in Paragraph 8.1 and Appendix B).
- 2.3 The Committee considers grant funding of £1500 to the Walsworth Festival Association towards the cost of holding the Festival on Walsworth Common on Sunday 17th May 2015 (as presented in Paragraph 8.2 and Appendix C).
- 2.4 The Committee considers grant funding of £500 to the Hitchin Branch of the National Childbirth Trust towards the cost of holding an event aimed at parents and families to raise funds for the branch (as presented in Paragraph 8.3 and Appendix D)
- 2.5 That the Committee considers awarding support funding in relation to any potential Highways schemes as proposed and discussed under Paragraph 8.4 of this report.
- 2.6 That the Committee endorses the actions taken by the Community 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 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 expressed in the Priorities for the District.
- 3.4 Production of this report is a requirement of the 'Priorities for the District' in which the Community Officer is required to produce a formal report to the Area Committee a minimum of four times 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 included 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 and 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 Spread sheet, which relates to the Area Committee budget balances for the current financial year 2014/15.
- 7.2 The spread sheet 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 **£18,020**

- 7.4 There are no funds within the Area Committee's 2013/14 Area Grant Budget that remain uncommitted. However, there are **£3,056** available allocated to generic headings.
- 7.5 The current level of unallocated funds within the Area Committee's existing small MoU Budget is **£2,530**

8. PROJECT/ ACTIVITY/ SCHEME DETAILS

8.1 Vaisakhi Procession

The Sri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara are organising the annual Vaisakhi procession through Hitchin Town Centre. This annual event has been held for over 15 years and now forms an important part of the community calendar each year. The event celebrates the initiation of the Sikh faith and provides an opportunity for the local Sikh community to engage with the wider population thus promoting greater cohesion and understanding of other cultures in the town.

For the last decade the Hitchin Committee have provided grant funding of around £1000 annually towards the cost of putting on the event. The Sri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara are requesting a contribution of £1000 towards the cost of traffic management necessary for the safe organisation of the Vaisakhi procession.

The grant report for this project is presented at Appendix B.

8.2 Walsworth Festival Association

The Walsworth Festival Association are requesting £1500 towards the cost of putting on a community event on Walsworth Common on Sunday May 17th. The event provides an opportunity for local groups and organisations to promote their activities and brings the community from the north side of Hitchin together. This annual event has taken place on the Common for the last 40 years and is a mainstay of Hitchin life.

The grant report for this project is presented at Appendix C.

8.3 National Childbirth Trust (NCT) Hitchin Branch

The Hitchin Branch of NCT are planning to hold an event called Bump, Baby and Toddler Fair at North Herts College Hitchin Campus. The event is aimed at parents and will help promote local groups, organisations and businesses who provide services for pregnancy, babies and those with young families.

The group are requesting £500 grant funding towards the cost of venue hire and printing costs.

The event will be free entry to the public. Income will be raised by charging organisations to display at the event and any profit will be used by the branch to fund their ongoing services which provide support services to local parents.

The grant report for this project is presented at Appendix D.

8.4 Highways Matters

It was agreed that a section entitled 'Highways Matters' is included within the Area Grant applications and community update Report 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, as a body, 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 - 2015 baseline budget has stayed the same as the previous year.
- 10.2 The former MoU Budget is subject to a 7.1 per cent reduction each year through to financial year 2015 - 2016.
- 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 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 Hitchin Area Committee Budget Report 2014/15
- 15.2 Appendix B Sri Guru Singh Sbha Gurdwara – Grant Report
- 15.3 Appendix C Walsworth Festival Association – Grant Report
- 15.4 Appendix D National Childbirth Trust Hitchin Branch – Grant Report
- 15.5 Appendix E 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.