

TITLE OF REPORT: GRANTS, GRANT APPLICATIONS & COMMUNITY UPDATE

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY & COMMUNITY SERVICES

PORTFOLIO HOLDER: COUNCILLOR TONY HUNTER

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 To advise the Committee on the current expenditure and balances of the Area Committee 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 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.
- 1.5 To provide a brief update and report progress to the Committee on a number of issues raised at previous Hitchin Area Committee meetings, such as the Dell, Walsworth Community Centre, and '20 is Plenty', 20 MPH speed limits.

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 £1500, (being the maximum the officer is able to recommend) for Homestart North Herts who are requesting £3,300 in order to organise two trips / activities for disadvantaged families in Hitchin, organise fundraising events and a team building session for their volunteers (as outlined in 8.1 Appendix B), noting the advice of officers at para 8.1 in regard to the withdrawal of Herts CC funding.
- 2.3 The Committee considers grant funding of £1500, (being the maximum the officer is able to recommend) to Child UK who are requesting £1,665 towards Summer Holiday Activities for young people based around the Coffeemill Youth Centre on Westmill.(as outlined in 8.2 Appendix C)
- 2.4 That the Committee note the updates at section 8.4 of the report in regards to Harrison Court access, The Dell, Walsworth Community Centre and 20 MPH speed limits, and the intention of the Principal Transport Policy Officer to attend and update the Committee at its September meeting on progress with the latter.
- 2.5 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, the Council's Constitution, and the guidance of the existing 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'.

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 end of the 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 2015/16 Area Grant Budget is **£35,300**
- 7.5 There are no funds within the Area Committee's 2014/15 Area Grant Budget that remain uncommitted. However, there are **£13,777** available allocated to generic headings.

8. PROJECT/ ACTIVITY/ SCHEME DETAILS

8.1 Home-Start

Home-Start has recently had to close their family support group that was based in Hitchin as the funding for the project, provided by the Herts County Council, had ceased. Therefore, they are requesting £3300 grant funding in order to provide two activities/outings for those families affected by the closure of the family support group (20 -30 families), and to assist with fund raising activities to create income for the organisation and promote their work in the local community.

- Summer outing to Standalone Farm to support vulnerable families in Hitchin and the local surrounding villages (this will include entrance fees and a coach for families without transport).
- Christmas party for the families in December and providing craft sessions in the holidays to show parents activities they can do with their children at low cost.
- They will be taking on two work experience students from The Priory School in who will be supervised by a university student, who is home for the holidays. Working alongside staff and existing volunteers, they will assist Home-Start to organise a fundraising event. The volunteers have contacted the Authority to seek permission for use of the Market Place to hold a family fun day. The event will be similar to a village fete, stalls with items for sale, games, bouncy castle etc. The money made from this will go towards the home visiting service that is now also under threat of funding.
- The students will work with the volunteers to also arrange low key events in order to promote the fun day and raise funds, such as bag packing at local supermarkets and charity collection tins in the town. They intend to produce flyers and promote via local press, radio and shops.

With the many changes that Home-Start North Herts have had to face recently they are intending to run a team building day which will include all volunteers, staff and trustees. The event will allow them to forward plan and discuss fund raising strategies ensuring the continuation of their services which support the most vulnerable families in the community, and discussing new ideas on how and where to seek funding

This would be held at Westmill Community Centre with 45 Home-start volunteers attending.

Members are asked to consider whether they wish to provide funding to this project at this stage, early after the announcement by HCC that they are ceasing to fund Homestart across the county or whether they wish to allocate a grant 'in principle' awaiting further information. There remains a degree of uncertainty about how such support will be delivered in future, but the increased use of Childrens Centres and health visiting services may be one possibility.

8.2 Child UK

Child UK have managed to sustain the Friday Night Project for over eight years in ever changing targeted areas, making a very positive impact amongst the local communities that they work in. The success has been mostly due to their multi-agency partnership approach. The project is targeting the 7-12 and 13-19 year old age group from Hitchin. They have carried out an extensive consultation with the young people and with partners to identify those who would benefit from the project. The project will deliver a variety of exciting multi-sports to the young people to give them something positive to

do using the temporary multi-use games area and the Coffeemill at John Barker place; this will attempt to counteract the recent higher level of anti-social behaviour (ASB). Child UK are applying for £1,665 grant funding towards initiatives aimed at disadvantaged young people in Hitchin and those who at risk of offending.

Child UK has a proven track record of success and tends to attract the targeted groups who have previously been involved in anti-social behaviour (ASB). By harnessing their youthful energy in a positive way, by providing their chosen activities to divert them from the pitfalls of substance misuse and youth related ASB. There is a lack of positive activities for young people in the local area; therefore it is even more important now to address the situation and the increasing levels of ASB. Outlined below are the objectives, outputs and outcomes of the project as specified by Child UK.

Project Objectives:

- The current project at various sites has been an enormous success over the last eight years at all of the sites. There has been a high retention rate of young people of approximately 80%, which has established a core group of participants on a weekly basis. We anticipate about 25 young people to attend each week.
- By targeting the activities at peak times of anti-social behaviour the project has been able to divert the young people to positive activities during these periods. This has helped reduce anti-social behaviour, particularly the criminal damage and vandalism that has previously occurred.
- The activities promote a healthier lifestyle to the young people and reduce the risk of substance misuse, particularly with alcohol.
- The project is focusing on encouraging vulnerable young people to have greater positive participation amongst their peers in their community. Partners and stakeholders have been engaged and encouraged to work together to create positive opportunities for young people in a socially inclusive manner.
- The project is open to all young people of all backgrounds and abilities. Our projects promote equality of opportunity for all.
- The young people have established their own code of conduct and rules, with good behaviour being prevalent across such an inclusive group of young people from all backgrounds.
- The project is a joint initiative with the support of North Hertfordshire District Council, the Community Safety Team including the support of our other partners and members of the North Herts ASB group, local police, and North Herts Homes. Project delivery partners include CHILD UK, Youth Connexions and Hitchin Town FC.

Outputs:

- A programme of sporting and leisure activities for young people. The project is aimed at 7-12 year olds (from 6.00-7.00pm) and 13-19 year olds (from 7.00-8.00pm) but we would also include any siblings who may just be slightly out of the specified age range.
- Timescale: 3 hour sessions to be provided once a week, over a 10 week period.
- Dates: 30th June to 1st September
- Approx. 25 young people to attend the sessions on a weekly basis.
- To demonstrate successful partnership working amongst the local community and stakeholders, that will break down barriers with the young people.

- A register will be taken each week to see how many and which young people are attending the project.

Outcomes:

Promoting health and well being: The activities promote a healthier lifestyle to young people and reduce the risk of substance misuse, particularly with alcohol. Amongst our partnership team we aim to make young people aware of the dangers and pitfalls of substance misuse, and encourage them to spend their leisure time in more positive and healthy activities. Youth Connexions will deliver workshops on-site engaging those watching or waiting to join in the activities. They will be delivering recognised outcomes for young people in the areas of Sexual Health, Healthy Eating/Lifestyle, Drug and Alcohol Education and promoting positive activities and participation. The project will have a weekly theme and topic to focus on whilst the activities are running.

Promoting community safety: By targeting the activities at peak times of anti-social behaviour the project will help divert the young people to join in positive activities during these periods. This has consistently helped to reduce anti-social behaviour in North Hertfordshire.

Additional outcomes include:

- Reduction in anti-social behaviour whilst the project is running.
- Referrals to specialist/other sports clubs and activity.
- Positive feedback from young people through the use of informal questionnaires.
- Young people learn alternative ways of spending their leisure time.
- Young people learn positive ways of expressing themselves.
- Young people develop improved confidence and self-esteem from achieving a level of skill in a new activity.
- To improve the social skills of the young people.
- To mentor potential volunteers to help in future delivery and sustainability.
- To respect others and be respected.

8.3 **Update on previous grants awarded**

North Herts Samaritans based in Hitchin were very grateful for the grants totalling £1,200 received last July from the Area Committees of North Hertfordshire District Council, towards the cost of CCTV and ancillary wiring.

As their existing system was no longer fit for purpose and it was vitally important to have an updated system to protect visitors, volunteers and premises.

The new system is working well and all volunteers feel they are working in a much safer environment, which in turn allows them to provide a more relaxed and supportive service to those people who contact the Samaritans in distress or with feelings of suicide.

8.4 **Community Update**

8.4.1 **Walsworth Community Centre**

Officers have explained to the WCA that the council needs to reduce the overall net cost of providing community centres in the district and wish to explore ways of achieving this with respective community associations. Officers would like to seek a mutually beneficial way forward and will be meeting with representatives of the Walsworth Community Association later in July to discuss possibilities.

No report to Cabinet is currently pending as we would like to reach a mutually agreed position with the Community Association on the way forward and report on that.

8.4.2 **Harrison Court - access**

The path is in place, the gate is open and signage to indicate that it is not a public right of way is expected to be in place by mid July.

8.4.3 **The Dell – update from Head of Leisure and Environmental Services**

At the meeting of Hitchin Area Committee on 3rd March 2015 it was resolved that:

- 1 That the Head of Policy and Community Services be requested to take note of the comments raised by Members of the Committee regarding the use of the Dell in respect of the existing covenants and previous informal use;
- 2 That the Head of Finance, Performance and Asset Management and the Property Solicitor be requested to discuss these concerns and the feasibility of making provision for using The Dell for Community Use;
- 3 That the Head of Finance, Performance and Asset Management be requested to present an updated Information Note on the feasibility of making provision for using the Dell for Community Use to the next meeting of the Hitchin Committee scheduled for 26 May 2015;
- 4 That the Head of Finance, Performance and Asset Management and the Property Solicitor be requested to consider a new Option 5 that would support an 'open use' of The Dell following the removal of existing covenants.

Following that meeting this matter was referred to the Head of Leisure & Environmental Services who has service management responsibility for the Dell and the delivery of Green Space Strategy Action Plan. Officers are currently considering the Committee's request in consultation with the Portfolio Holder and will update the Area Committee once this work has been concluded.

8.4.4 **20 MPH Speed Limits**

County Councillors Judi Billing and Derrick Ashley have been advised of the wishes of the Hitchin Committee to proceed with the application for 20 mph in Bearton Ward, Hitchin.

Following receipt of the Hitchin Area Committee's request in 2014, the list of roads being promoted by County Councillor Judi Billing for inclusion within the proposed 20mph Zone(s) was reviewed and roads added if not already on the list.

The roads as listed below have been included in the assessment by HCC. HCC will not know which roads would require traffic calming (or just speed limit signs) until the assessment is complete. HCC are currently progressing with this assessment. At the next Hitchin Committee meeting in September, the Principal Transport Policy Officer will give a fuller update.

Roads to be included within the 20mph assessment;

- 1 Lancaster Road
- 2 Lancaster Avenue
- 3 York Road
- 4 Bunyan Road
- 5 Dukes Lane
- 6 Florence Street

7. Kings Road
8. Alexandra Road
9. Brampton Park Road
10. Balmoral Road
11. Dacre Road
12. Radcliffe Road
13. Whitehurst Road
14. Wilton Road
15. The north end of Ickleford Road
16. Baliol Road
17. Bearton Road
18. Stormont Road
19. Periwinkle Lane
20. Water Lane
21. The length of Ickleford Road not included at 15 above.

Councillor Billing is funding the assessment of these roads through her Highways Locality Budget (HLB). Surveys of existing traffic speeds are currently taking place and it is expected that the assessment will be concluded and proposals finalised in the current financial year. The assessment will be based on speed limit criteria contained within the County Council's Speed Management Strategy.

Once the proposed coverage of the 20mph Zone(s) has been finalised, Councillor Billing intends to utilise further HLB funding in 2015/16 to progress the necessary legal consultations/notices, through to introduction of the Traffic Regulation Order and associated speed limit signing on site. The new 20 zones are likely to be in place towards the end of 2015/16.

Lance Holman (Lance.Holman@hertfordshire.gov.uk) at HCC is overseeing the current assessment of the 20mph speed limits and a full list of 20mph limits can be requested.

Any further requests for 20mph can be raised with the relevant County Councillor for the area. Hertfordshire County Council does not have any core funding for 20mph limits. Therefore the best route would be for members to raise it with their County Councillor to see if they would be willing to fund it via their Highways Locality Budget.

8.5 **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 2015/16 baseline budget has stayed the same as the previous year.

10.2 Appendix A provides the detailed budget end of year for 2015/16 position for the Committee.

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. 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 for 2015/16
- 15.3 Appendix B Home-start – Grant Report
- 15.4 Appendix C Child UK – Grant Report

16. CONTACT OFFICERS

- 16.1 Author: Claire Morgan Community Development Officer
Telephone: 01462 474226
Email: claire.morgan@north-herts.gov.uk
- 16.1 Contributors: Shah Mohammed, Assistant Accountant
Telephone: 01462 474240
EMail: shah.mohammed@north-herts.gov.uk
- Liz Green, Head of Policy & Community Services
Telephone: 01462 474230
Email: liz.green@north-herts.gov.uk
- Andrew Cavanagh, Head of Finance.
Telephone: 01462 474243
Email: Andrew.cavanagh@north-herts.gov.uk

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17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

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