

**HITCHIN COMMITTEE
17 NOVEMBER 2015**

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

AGENDA ITEM No.

6

TITLE OF REPORT: GRANTS, 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 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.

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 £500 to Hitchin Town Band towards the cost of recording and producing a Compact Disc to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Town Band. (as outlined in 8.1.1 Appendix B)
- 2.3 The Committee considers the allocation of £1,500 (being the maximum the officer can recommend.) Westmill Community Association are requesting £10,266.55 funding to the towards the costs of fixtures and fittings needed in order for the new Centre to be fully functional. (as outlined in 8.1.2 Appendix C)
- 2.4 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 RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

- 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 2015/16.
- 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 unallocated 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 **£41,800**

- 7.4 The current level of unallocated funds Area Committee's 2014/15 Area Grant Budget is **£7,022**

This figure takes into account all of the amounts that were previously allocated to generic headings. Due to the recent decision by Cabinet to allow area committee funds to be carried forward (with the agreement of Council) any amounts previously allocated to a generic heading have now been transferred on the budget sheet to be shown as unallocated in order to show more clearly the amount of funds available for projects and grant funding.

- 7.5 The unallocated funds from both the 2014/15 and 2015/16 Area Grant budget totals £48,822. Including this one there are 3 more Area Committee meetings in this financial year which would calculate to approximately £16,274 available per meeting.

8. PROJECT/ ACTIVITY/ SCHEME DETAILS

8.1 Grant Applications

8.1.1 Hitchin Town Band

Hitchin Town Band is a highly regarded group that represents Hitchin across the UK and abroad. Six years ago they created a Youth Brass Band who are offered tuition and the loan of instruments along with the opportunity to perform with a group. As the musicians in the Youth Band progress they are able to join the Senior Band.

Following some careful historical research the Band have established that 2016 will be the 150th anniversary of the founding of Hitchin Brass Band. Amongst a number of special events planned to mark the occasion, the Band wishes to record a commemorative CD with an accompanying illustrated booklet which will summarise the history of the band. They expect to record the CD in late March / April 2016 ready for sale at their concert at Hitchin Festival in July.

The band's first CD was recorded in 2009. The CD was well received but whilst many of the same musicians remain with the Band, they are now performing to their highest standard, becoming 3rd section National Champions in 2012, 2nd Area Champions in 2013 and achieving promotion to the 1st Section in 2015.

Under the terms of a limited PRS licence designed for community/educational groups the Band will produce up to 250 CDs. These will be available for sale to members and friends of the Band, for those attending concerts and via the Hitchin Town Band Website. The CDs will be sold at £10 each and up to 50 CDs will be given as gifts to members of KKM Sponsheim Band (Bingen) when they visit Hitchin in June as part of the Band's 150th anniversary celebrations. Over time, sales would amount to £2000 gross (based on 200 sold).

The Band are requesting £500 towards the cost of producing the CD, the remaining cost of £1,152 will be provided by donations and from the organisation's own reserves. The Band's accounts have been examined and they currently have around 40% of their annual earnings remaining, thus more than sufficient to cover their proportion of the costs.

There is no record of Hitchin Town Band receiving any grant funding from North Hertfordshire District Council in the past.

(As outlined in recommendation 2.2, Appendix B)

8.1.2 Westmill Community Centre

The new Centre, currently under construction will be completed in January 2016. Officers have been working with the Community Association to assist and advise on the smooth transition from the old centre into the new building.

In order for the new building to be fully functional when the Community Association take possession of it, they will be needing the essential fixtures and fittings.

The Community Association Committee have provided a list of items required in order for the new Centre to be fully functional along with the estimated costs. A large amount of the funding will be needed for blinds as the new centre has been designed to be light and airy with lots of large windows. The estimated cost of blinds is £3,000. Other items include, tables, chairs, folding chairs, trolleys to store folding tables and chairs, catering equipment, soft furnishings and equipment for the bar. In total the Community Association are estimating that £10,266 will be needed. However, members should be minded that they are at liberty to allocate above this amount if they wish. Officers would be able to, (if agreed by Members) release funding to the organisation on the receipt of invoices, rather than in a one off payment.

(As outlined in recommendation 2.3, Appendix C)

8.2 **Update on previous grants awarded**

8.2.1 Rhythms of the World Outreach Program

The ROTW Outreach Program received £1,500 grant funding in 2014 in order to run art projects taking the ethos of the festival out to groups that may not otherwise have the opportunity to experience it. The programme worked in partnership with schools, frail elderly people and disability groups.

The outreach programme consisted of 5 music and dance workshops with disadvantaged groups. It also involved local schools, bringing them together to create a giant community art piece that was displayed at the festival. Feedback from the organisations involved in these projects is attached in Appendix D.

8.3 **Hitchin Committee Project monitoring chart**

At the request of the Chairman of the Hitchin Area Committee, and in order for the Committee to monitor progress on projects and issues, an appendix has been included for information which outlines each issue / project and lists the previous update, the current update and the department responsible.

(As outlined in Appendix F)

8.4 **Highways Matters**

It was agreed that a section entitled 'Highways Matters' be 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 aid/financial support. The Committee has delegated powers, as a body, to administer funds from the budgets described. However, this does not include grants for district wide activities.
- 9.2 Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides a General Power of Competence which gives local authorities the power to do anything that individuals generally may do for the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident in its area.
- 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

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
- 15.2 Appendix B Hitchin Band – Grant Report
- 15.3 Appendix C Westmill Community Association – Grant Report
- 15.4 Appendix D Rhythms of the World Outreach Feedback
- 15.5 Appendix E HAC Monitoring Chart

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17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

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