

**HITCHIN COMMITTEE
1 MARCH 2016**

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

AGENDA ITEM No.

7

TITLE OF REPORT: GRANTS, GRANT APPLICATIONS & COMMUNITY UPDATE

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY & COMMUNITY SERVICES

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: 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.

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 the National Childbirth Trust North Herts Branch towards the hire of a venue for their Bump, Baby and Beyond Fair on 14th May. (as outlined in 8.1.1 Appendix B)
- 2.3 The Committee considers the allocation of **£1,000** to the Hitchin Stroke Group towards venue hire and transport costs. (as outlined in 8.1.2 Appendix C)
- 2.4 The Committee considers the allocation of **£931** to Family Matters towards running a 6 week summer holiday programme. (as outlined in 8.1.3 Appendix D)
- 2.5 The Committee considers the allocation of £1,500 (being the maximum the officer can recommend.) to the Hitchin Thespians who are requesting **£6,000** to replace the flooring in Woodside Hall. (as outlined in 8.1.4 Appendix E)
- 2.6 The Committee considers the allocation of £1500 (being the maximum the offer can recommend) to Rhythms of the World who are requesting **£4,280** towards the cost of putting on 3 community events in different locations in Hitchin. (as outlined in 8.1.5 Appendix F)

- 2.7 The Committee considers the allocation of funds to assist groups who will be likely to require grants in the next 12 month period as outlined in 8.2.
- 2.8 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 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 **£22,820**. If members are minded to agree the total amount of grant funds requested this will equate to a total of £12,711, leaving a remainder of £10,109 in the 2015/16 budget to either allocate or carry over to the 2016/17 financial year.
- 7.4 The Area Committee's 2014/15 Area Grant Budget is has now been fully committed.

8. PROJECT/ ACTIVITY/ SCHEME DETAILS

8.1 Grant Applications

8.1.1 National Childbirth Trust Bump Baby & Beyond Fair

The local branch of the national Childbirth Trust (NCT) is organising their second 'Bump, Baby and Beyond Fair' at North Herts College Hitchin Site on May 14th 2016. They are requesting £500 grant funding to cover the cost of the venue hire. This will ensure that any funds raised can be utilised by the local group to continue to provide it's services supporting new parents.

This is only the second year this event has taken place. The group was awarded £500 grant funding from the 2014/15 Area Committee budgets, not having made any grant applications to NHDC previously.

Income from the event consists of entry fee of £2.00, (they expect 200 visitors) the Stalls fee to local businesses and sale of advertising space in the programme which raised a total of £1,392.

The group provide free stalls to local not for profit groups and charities providing information for parents and parents-to-be, such as Children's Centres, Homestart, Library Service, fostering and adoption services, midwives and real nappies.

The finances for the 2015 are outlined below.

Amount raised:

Stands and advertising. - £1400.00

On the day refreshments/entry etc - £324.00

Total - £1724.00

Amount Spent/costs:

Venue - £297.00

Tables - £200.00

Printing/programme - £269

Other (decorations, refreshments etc) £65.00

Total - £831

Minus £500 grant from NHDC which covered venue hire and printing.

Total spent - £332.00

Total profit to NCTNH- £1392.00

In addition to providing support and information to parents-to-be, new parents and those with school-age children from all backgrounds & ethnic groups the event also aids the economic growth in the area by promoting local businesses.

(As outlined in recommendation 2.2, Appendix B)

8.1.2 Hitchin Stroke Group

The Hitchin Stroke Group aims to improve the speech of stroke patients, let them meet other stroke patients and give carers two hours per week of free time. The group holds weekly, two-hour meetings at Anderson House, Florence Street, regarded by many of the clients as the highlight of their week. Clients are referred to the group by the Lister Hospital.

The group costs £1600 per year to operate and the majority of the costs are taken up with transport for the members to the club and hire of the venue. The group are requesting £1000 grant funding to continue for the next 12 months.

The Hitchin Stroke group received £1000 grant funding in September 2014 from the Area Committee. The group is under new management from volunteers who recently agreed to take over following the death (in close succession) of the married couple who had been organising the group for many years.

The new committee are, in many ways, starting from scratch and slowly building their experience of gaining funding and promoting the group.

(As outlined in recommendation 2.3, Appendix C)

8.1.3 Family Matters

Family Matters is a newly established nurturing and learning-based community group committed to positively supporting vulnerable, hard-to-reach families with children under 5 years of age during the school term time and their older siblings during all school holidays. The group work in partnership with Children's Centres, HomeStart, CAB, Westmill Community Centre, Relate and NHCVS.

The group came about following the closure of the HomeStart family support group. Some of the parents involved wanted to ensure that they still had access to a support group and sought the advice of NHCVS who assisted them to take over the operation of the service initially with funding via the 'Love Your Neighbourhood' project, part funded by the North Herts Local Strategic Partnership.

The group are requesting £931 grant funding to support a 6-week summer holiday programme and healthy lifestyle strategy based at Oughton Children's Centre for 10-15 adults and 20-25 children.

The District Offer (Health and Wellbeing Partnership) provided £10k to the Hitchin/Baldock/Letchworth clusters of Children's Centres to fund practitioners to undertake Let's Get Cooking training with the Children's Food Trust. They also have a small pot of funding which they are using to run family cookery programmes and some other small events linked to healthy eating. The funding will be spent by the end of the summer holidays.

Therefore, this project does not constitute duplication of services as the Let's Get Cooking programme will cease prior to the Family Matters summer programme of activities and also healthy eating is only a small part the Family Matters project.

(As outlined in recommendation 2.4, Appendix D)

8.1.4 Hitchin Thespians

New flooring is required for Woodside Hall as part of a refurbishment project. The organisation has raised funds for other parts of the project such as the purchase of new tables and towards new chairs and they are approaching HCC Councillors for locality budget funding towards this.

The group are requesting £6000 to cover 100% cost of replacing the flooring in Woodside Hall. This will provide an enhanced community facility in the local area which is hired out to a number of groups as well as being used by Hitchin Thespians for rehearsal space and smaller performances. The new vinyl flooring will extend the range of use for the hall to include dance groups and classes and generate more income for the Charity.

The group have provided the end of year accounts for 2014, the end of year 2015 having not yet been audited. These accounts show that the group held reserves of £25,578 which is approximately one year's operating costs as one would expect.

(As outlined in recommendation 2.5, Appendix E)

8.1.5 Rhythms of the World

Rhythms of the World (ROTW) are a registered Charity run by volunteers. The principal objectives of the Charity are:

- To provide an opportunity for people to engage in community activity.
- To provide a bridge of common interest and meaningful interchange between different age, race, ability and economic groups in the community.
- To provide a stimulus to the arts in the region.
- To provide an outlet for the energies of young people.
- To educate.
- To promote North Hertfordshire, raising the national profile of the region as a cultural and commercial centre.

ROTW achieve these objectives through the delivery of a festival or series of events of music, dance, art and cuisine from 'around the World and around the corner' which are held in Hitchin, Hertfordshire each summer. It also delivers an Outreach Programme which brings the essence and ethos of the festival to groups that might not otherwise have the opportunity to experience it.

The 2015 Festival ran at a loss due to a drop in the number of people through the gate. Due to this ROTW will not be running the large scale two day event usually associated with the organisation. The trustees have decided that instead they will go back to the original ethos of the organisation and bring the festival events very much back into the community.

Overt the last 10 years the Hitchin Committee have provided some financial support to ROTW to a greater or lesser extent as outlined in the table below. The level of support was higher when the event was a free festival in the Town Centre and was reduced when it relocated to the Hitchin Priory for safety reasons. The move to private land necessitated an entry fee being charged.

2007	£10,000	Town Centre Event
2008	£10,000	Town Centre Event
2009	£10,000	Town Centre Event
2010	£5,000	Festival at the Priory
2011	£1,000	Festival at the Priory
2012	N/A	Grant funding refused
2013	£1,500	Family Fun Day (no festival this year)
2014	N/A	No application
2015	£1,500	Outreach programme

ROTW are staging a series of events to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the charity. Many of these will be on licensed premises or be ticketed in order to raise funds for the Charity. They wish to make some events free so that people of all means can access the events in line with the Charities objectives. Three main events will be held through the summer that requires funding for event infrastructure:

- A music and arts event at Walsworth festival
- A 25-hour musical event in St. Mary's Church
- A family Fun day in the Market Place, Hitchin

The total cost of organising the above events will be £5,830 and the organisation expect to raise £1,550 via sponsorship and fundraising activities. ROTW are requesting grant funding of £4,280 to cover the anticipated shortfall.

A break down of the costs is outlined below:

Tent hire: Main Cover (Walsworth Festival).....	£ 600.00
Tent hire: (Market Place).....	£ 900.00
Tables/ chairs/ security fencing	£ 180.00
Security fencing.....	£ 300.00
Gazebo	£ 150.00
Generator hire.....	£ 300.00
Sound Systems & Crew	£ 1,100.00
Stage and infrastructure hire	£ 1,550.00
Portable Toilet Cabin hire.....	£ 500.00
Transport hire.....	£ 250.00
Total	£ 5,830.00

(As outlined in 2.6, Appendix F)

8.2 **Prospective Grants for financial year 2016/17**

As requested by members at the meeting held 17th November 2015 (Min 68) the Communities Officer contacted previous grant applicants to ascertain how much grant funding they might be applying for in the 2016/17 financial year.

It was made clear to organisations that although funds may be allocated for that purpose this would not guarantee grant funding. Groups will have to enter in to the usual application process and comply with current grant criteria.

If members are minded they may allocate funds from the unallocated 2015-16 budget as well as from the 2016-17 development budgets. Outlined below is a table which outlines the groups who responded to the request for information. This should be used as a guideline only should members wish to follow this course of action as any decision to fund can only be based on the submission of a detailed grant application.

ORGANISATION	Approx. Requirement 2016/17	Amount Received 2015/16
Early Days Playgroup	£1500	£1500
Clean Up Hitchin	£2500	£2200
Homestart North Herts	£7500	£7500
Hitchin Festival	£2000	N/A (former minor MOU recipient)
TOTAL	£13500	

Whilst members of the Hitchin Area committee requested that the communities officer approach organisations who had previously received grant funding, and the table above demonstrates those who are likely to resubmit grant applications from remaining 2015/16 budgets, officers advise that it would not be good practice in terms of transparency of decision making or expenditure to 'ring fence' any portion of the committee's budget towards these groups until such time as any grant application has been received, evaluated and a decision to fund, or not, has been made. To do otherwise would or could infer continued funding, which is not the purpose of these annual grant budgets.

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 G)

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 but excluding grants for district-wide activities. The Committee has delegated powers, as a body, to allocate discretionary budgets and devolved budgets within the terms determined by the Council.

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. This may be for, or otherwise than 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 National Childbirth Trust North Herts – Grant Report
- 15.3 Appendix C Hitchin Stroke Group – Grant Report
- 15.4 Appendix D Family Matters - Grant Report
- 15.5 Appendix E Hitchin Thespians - Grant Report
- 15.6 Appendix F Rhythms of the World - Grant Report
- 15.7 Appendix G 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.