

HITCHIN COMMITTEE

6 DECEMBER 2016

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

AGENDA ITEM No.

6

TITLE OF REPORT: GRANTS AND COMMUNITY UPDATE

REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF FINANCE, POLICY & GOVERNENCE
EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND RURAL AFFAIRS:
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, which confirm to the Authority's Grants Policy approved by Cabinet on June 14th 2016.
- 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 Ward Budgets as set out in Appendix A – Hitchin Area Committee budget for 2016/17.
- 2.2 The Committee considers the request for £1,274 grant funding from Resolve drug and alcohol counselling service, towards equipment needed to support their newly established service provision in Hitchin. As outlined in paragraph 8.1.1 and Appendix B
- 2.3 The Committee considers the request for £4,033 grant funding to Smartys day nursery towards the cost of including disabled accessibility to the overall project to extend their building. It is recommended that the 'Capital Visioning' reallocated budget be utilised for this purpose. As outlined in paragraph 8.1.2 and Appendix C
- 2.4 The Committee considers the request for £1,000 to the African and Caribbean Seniors & Carers Luncheon Club to a provide seated keep-fit (strength & stability) class. As outlined in paragraph 8.1.3 and Appendix D
- 2.5 The Committee considers the request for £1,086 grant funding to 8th Hitchin Oughton Scout Group towards camping equipment for outdoor activities as outlined in paragraph 8.1.4 and Appendix E

- 2.6 The Committee considers the request for £600 grant funding towards Small Acts of Kindness CIC to assist with costs of sourcing and distributing Warm in Winter Gift Bags to older people living in North Herts, as outlined in 8.1.5, Appendix F
- 2.7 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 as agreed by Cabinet in June 2016.
- 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 bodies/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 Hitchin Area Committee Budget Spread sheet, which relates to the Area Committee budget balances for the for 2016/17.
- 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 carried over from the Area Committee's 2015/16 Area Grant Budget now stands at £15,420.

The development budget for 2016/17 was £19,600 as outlined in Appendix A - Hitchin Area Committee budget for 2016/17. Grant funding of £10,303 has been released as grant funding to local community groups, leaving a remainder of £9,297 to allocate from discretionary budgets.

At the last meeting in September 2016, the following amounts, totalling £4,583, be re-allocated to the base budget:

(iii) £3,333 labelled as Junction Protection;

(iv) £1,250 labelled as Pedestrian Island at Our Lady's Primary School.

The above amounts originally formed part of the 'Capital Visioning' budget and as such must be used towards capital projects.

This equates to a total of **£24,717** currently available and if distributed evenly between the remaining two meetings in the current civic year this would provide a budget of £12,358 available per meeting.

If all the grant applications outlined below are successful the spend for this meeting will be: £4,135 (not including the Capital Spend of £4,033).

8. PROJECT/ ACTIVITY/ SCHEME DETAILS

8.1 Grant Applications

8.1.1 Resolve Drug & Alcohol treatment service

Resolve is an independent adult drug and alcohol treatment service with a proven track record of setting up and delivering treatment services in Hertfordshire. Resolve was established in Welwyn Garden City in 2008 and is now the longest continuously running adult drug and alcohol day service in the town. They have a targeted outreach programme delivering services in Hatfield. The new project in Hitchin has come from a pilot drop-in service Resolve delivered over the summer of 2015. Many links were made within the district including letting the local community and health professionals know about this new service.

Resolve aims to help people stop the cycle of alcohol/substance misuse through a structured programme for them to change unhealthy behaviours and live life substance free, healthy and contributing to the community within which they live.

Resolve deliver an adult, structured drug and alcohol day treatment service with outreach support for people sleeping rough/drinking, using drugs in public spaces within the district. This will be provided from a service centre based in the Westmill Community Centre, John Barker Place, Hitchin. Resolve deliver group therapy sessions, one to one key work support and counselling daily (hours of business have started at three days a week – Monday, Wednesday and Friday. This will increase to five days a week as soon as funding permits with other services coming online as the service grows and funding is secured). Outreach Workers will go out into the local area to meet and work with people sleeping rough/homeless and/or drinking or using drugs in public spaces with the aim of bringing them off the streets, into treatment and ultimately back into independent living through a series of practical support and psychosocial interventions.

In addition, once the service is established Resolve aim to provide a Carer's/Family support services as well. Resolve already provide this as part of their Welwyn and Hatfield services and will extend this to the Hitchin project when they have the capacity to do so.

Resolve secured start-up funding from North Herts CVS (Love Your Neighbourhood) and an Awards for All Grant from Big Lottery for the running and operations of this project. No salaries are included in this funding; therefore Resolve is currently bearing the staffing costs in order to ensure the success of this service in the early days. The organisation hope to also provide a service that delivers outcomes for up to 50 people from within the town at any one time. They also aim to soon be providing a Carer's/Family support service for up to 50 people/family members of people suffering alcohol/substance misuse issues.

Resolve require funding in order to purchase necessary resources for the project to run from the Westmill Community Centre. This will include resources for delivering the structured therapy sessions and equipment clients and staff to use for the purpose of the work.

3 Office Chairs	£ *49.99 each = £149.97
1 Four drawer lockable filing cabinet	£ *125.00
<i>*(Can be provided as an In-Kind contribution from surplus furniture available at the Council Offices Gernon Road)</i>	
Flip Chart Easel and Flip chart paper	£ 199.00 + £35.50 = £234.50
Telephone with answerphone.....	£ 70.00
3 Reception Chairs and table	£ 159. Each =£477 + £85 = £562
1 Pavement Sign including artwork	£ 207.60
2 Flag Signs	£ 100 each= £200
	Total £1,274.00

8.1.2 Smartys Day Nursery

Smartys Day Nursery (Hitchin) is committed to providing high quality care and education for children aged 5 months to 5 years in a homely and caring atmosphere. Children are able to learn through play, enabling environments, and caring loving staff. Smartys offer compatible care prices for families in the Westmill Estate and the wider Hitchin and surrounding villages.

They are located in the Westmill area of Hitchin which is a statistically deprived area and many of the family referrals originate from the Oughton Children's Centre. These referrals are for childcare spaces for children of low income families to afford the same opportunities as other children in their early years.

Smartys work closely in partnership with a range of agencies, especially the Children's Centre, in order to 'track' the development of the children who access the funded hours.

Smartys are a charity nursery, and were the first community day nursery set up in Hitchin by Mrs Mick Furr OBE. Smartys are completely self-funded and totally community based.

The operation of the nursery is maintained from the incoming fees parents pay, balanced by the manager who maintains low out goings from the nursery.

Smartys has a dedicated volunteer management committee who support the manager to run the day to day operation of the nursery.

Smartys also have a parent committee who volunteer their time to support the nursery by organising fundraising events. They have organised events such as Bring and Buy Sales, cake sales and annual quiz nights. These events enabled the nursery to purchase air conditioning units for the summer periods, Electronic tablets for the children and staff to use, and various larger items of equipment.

Smartys are having an extension built onto the nursery, to allow the accommodation of 16 full time spaces for 3-5 year olds. With an accessible kitchen area, additional disabled accessible toilets included, and disabled access to the nursery with an accessible ramp and door entry along with repairs to the outside environment. By having the extension it will allow for the current pre school room to be transferred into an add-on baby room catering for babies between 17months – 2years.

This room will also be utilised and offered to community group use – via the Children’s Centre when not in use or at full capacity.

Smartys currently have a healthy waiting list and a high demand for their baby room. By having more spaces on offer this will give the nursery a continuity of 5 year users as parents will generally keep their children with Smartys until they are of school age.

Smartys are requesting **£4,033** towards this extension to cover the cost of the elements that provide disabled access.

Accessible toilet with Nappy changing unit	£2,940 + £154.79 =	£3094.79
Accessible kitchen area		£938.76

The entire project is costing in the region of £109,000 and they have raised funds both from their own reserves, fund raising activities and HCC Cllrs Barnard and Billing have both provided some of their Locality Budget funds for different parts of the project.

8.1.3 African & Caribbean Seniors & Carers Luncheon Club

The A&CS&C Luncheon Club have recently relocated from Bancroft Hall to the new Westmill Community Centre. The group have settled in really well and operate from their each Friday.

As part of the service the club runs a seated keep fit class which is open to all. They report huge improvements of many of the members who do the class each week. Some people could not walk unaided when they started the class are now able to walk short distances without assistance.

In order to continue this class the Club are requesting funding towards the costs which include venue hire and instructors fee. At present those attending the class do not contribute to the cost. They contribute towards their transport costs and if they stay for lunch they pay an additional £5.00.

In order to continue the class for the next 24 months the club will require £4,000. It has been recommended that they charge a £1.00 fee to each person; this will raise £2,400 towards the costs. In addition to funding applications made to the Herts County Councillors Locality budgets for a further £600.

This leaves a remainder of a £1,000 contribution from Hitchin Committee budgets if Members are minded to approve the grant application.

8.1.4 8th Hitchin Oughton Scout group

The 8th Hitchin Oughton Scout group was set up only 4 years ago in 2012. They provide children and young people (aged 6-18) with opportunities to have: new adventures, experience the outdoors; interact with others, grow in confidence and

reach their full potential. This includes activities such as camping and hiking challenges, unique experiences, trips, disability and cultural awareness.

The group are requesting funding towards camping equipment to provide for outdoor activities. The cost of the equipment equates to £1786. They have been successful in obtaining £700 grant funding from the Hitchin Youth Trust for some of the equipment. They are requesting the remainder **£1,086** from Hitchin Area Committee.

The Hitchin 8th is committed to delivering 50% of its activity outdoors which is why they are requesting grant funding in towards the provision of camping kit and equipment.

This objective is particularly important in this Scout group where many parents do not have the resources to pay for activities such as sports clubs or swimming lessons. The opportunities that the 8th Hitchin offer, provide in some cases, the only structured outdoors and fitness activities that these children benefit from outside of school.

The group are planning a range of exciting outdoor activities for the 2017 including hikes and camping sleepovers at local, district and county level. A grant would assist in the purchase of much needed kit to enable the group to take part in expedition challenges as well as county competitions. Other key activities they deliver include disability awareness, subsidised family excursions and delivering various achievement badges e.g. science and experiments.

The 8th Hitchin serves the catchment of Oughton which is one of the most disadvantaged areas in the town. The majority of children attend the school where they are based as a result of the Head Teacher fully supporting and promoting their activities to children and parents.

“The proportion of pupils who are supported through the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils in the care of the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is above average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.” Ofsted June 2015

The group will continue to engage more children and parents by offering an affordable option as compared to many other activities for children, with subs at £3 a week. They also provide financial assistance to support parents that are unable to cover funding for subs, uniform or trips and outings.

The new Scout section which started in September continues to grow as cubs feed through and they have a number of new volunteers taking up roles as assistant leaders, parent helpers and serving on the Executive Committee.

8.1.5 Small Acts of Kindness

The Committee is asked to consider a Grant Award of £600 to Small Acts of Kindness CIC. Small Acts of Kindness is an unregistered charity, consisting of 50 volunteers, which has been operating since 2014.

The group is seeking £2,100 in total from North Herts District Council and will be making representation at all 5 Area Committees during November /December 2016 cycle of meetings. Funding is being sought to assist with costs of sourcing and distributing 150 Warm in Winter Gift bags to older people living in North Herts. Each Warm in Winter Gift bag contain a large fleecy blanket, thermal socks, hat and gloves, a mug and a selection of hot drinks.

North Herts CVS, North Herts Community Transport and Hertfordshire Independent Living Services have all made requests for gift bags for their clients living in Hitchin, Baldock, Royston, Letchworth and the villages of Knebworth, Whitwell and Ashwell.

8.2 Update on grants previously awarded and community issues

8.2.1 Family Matters Group

Family Matters received £910 in March this year in order to run a 6 Week healthy lifestyle programme during the summer holiday period. This was aimed at parents with young children targeting families who may require some extra support due to a variety of issues. Families were referred from agencies such as Homestart, Children's Centre and Thriving Families.

The funding was utilised to implement a programme promoting a healthy lifestyle and awareness of the benefits of a diverse range of exercise activities. This incorporated sessions including; demonstrations, child friendly balanced menus and food tastings. The Sing & Signing sessions with music and movement and parachute games were enjoyed by children under 5 years and their older siblings.

The sessions held in local parks and the swimming at the Hitchin indoor pool were all well supported. Volunteers provided extra pairs of hands during the swimming sessions enabling the children to have individual support and guidance in the pool.

Positive Outcomes of the Programme

- Parents reported that they have an increased knowledge and awareness of how helpful planning their weekly shop and keeping to a set budget can make to their overall finances.
- They have appreciated the straight forward cookery menus and home baking and there has been much discussion over the benefits of using inexpensive fresh seasonal food. This in turn could be seen as saving money on their weekly food shopping.
- Parents were encouraged to sit down with their children to eat together. Parents reported that this does not always happen at home, but they felt they understood the importance of families sitting down together and conversing with their children. This in turn emphasised the pleasure of family life and well-being.
- An increased knowledge and awareness of the benefits of exercise and the impact this can have on long term health.
- How incorporating simple changes in lifestyle brings benefits to children and adults were acknowledged. Walking, swimming, nature walks, building family fun and fitness into families' everyday routine was discussed. Parents agreed that all of the outdoor activities; the games in the park, nature walks and the sessions at the swimming pool were all great fun and they hoped to incorporate some form of regular exercise into their lives.

Families were made aware of the range of community services on offer and with regular attendance at the Family Matters community group held at Oughton Children's Centre.

Parents reported that they feel more comfortable to enter the building and have got to know the staff at the Children's Centre. They now feel confident in taking up the advice and educational learning opportunities on offer to them. Knowledge of various volunteer opportunities was discussed and the merits of volunteering for future employment and the benefits of raised self-esteem and confidence for well-being were understood.

Overall parents felt that they learnt how important it is to have a good working knowledge of community, networks and services and they felt confident in asking for help and guidance before a problem became a crisis.

8.2.2 Westmill Community Association (WCA)

WCA were awarded £20,000 grant funding at the Hitchin Area Committee meeting in November 2015. This funding was to assist in the purchase of fixtures and fittings for the new Community Centre. The move to the new centre was delayed for some months and the funds were not released until the lease agreement was signed.

The new centre is now fully operational, the existing hirers are now settled in and new groups and activities are starting to operate from the centre. The centre manager is sending regular updates on spending to the Community Officer who will ensure the funding is spent in line with the grant conditions and policy.

Approximately £14,000 has been utilised to provide fixtures and fittings to allow for the smooth operation of the centre. Savings were made by the decision to use frosting on the large main hall windows rather than blinds. At the time of writing there was just under £6,000 left and a few items left to purchase, such as racking for the storage cupboards, projectors and screens and some more chairs.

8.2.3 Hitchin Museum, Paynes Park

The Hitchin Museum located on Paynes Park is currently closed to the public. However, the museum service continues to occupy the building and there are no plans to seek alternative uses for the facility.

8.3 **Highways Matters**

This section is included within the community update report for each committee cycle to facilitate debate and enable appropriate feedback on any of the proposed or listed Highways related schemes.

Any new proposals or revised schemes 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 and outlined in the current Grant Policy agreed by Cabinet in June 2016.

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. From the 2016/17 financial year, a proposal was made through the council's corporate business planning process to reduce the overall amount the council awards by way of grants, both area committee and district wide, by a suggested 20%. Following member workshops, there was a request that whilst the principle of saving approximately £86k of revenue was supported, the current level of district MoUs should be retained, thus the area committee element was reduced by a greater amount.
- 10.2 Appendix A provides the detailed budget for 2016/17.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no relevant risk entries that have been recorded on Covalent, the Council's performance and risk system. Individual events should have their own risk assessments in place to mitigate any health and safety issues. Whenever a request for grant funding for equipment is received, the recipient of the funding will be advised to obtain insurance for the item to avoid a repeat request for funding in the event of the equipment being stolen or damaged. 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 their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, 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 2016/17.
- 15.2 Appendix B - Resolve – Grant Report.
- 15.3 Appendix C - Smartys Day Nursery – Grant Report.
- 15.4 Appendix D - African and Caribbean Seniors and Carers Luncheon Club – Grant Report.
- 15.5 Appendix E - 8th Hitchin Oughton Scouts – Grant Report.
- 15.6 Appendix F - Small Acts of Kindess – 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

Kerry Shorrocks, Corporate Human Resources Manager
Telephone: 01462 474224
Email: kerry.shorrocks@north-herts.gov.uk

Tim Everitt, Performance Improvement Officer
Telephone: 01462 474646
Email: tim.everitt@north-herts.gov.uk

Reuben Ayavoo, Policy Officer
Telephone: 01462 474212
Email: reuben.ayavoo@north-herts.gov.uk

Anthony Roche, Corporate Legal Manager and Monitoring Officer
Telephone: 01462 474588
Email: anthony.roche@north-herts.gov.uk

17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 17.1 Review of Policies and Procedures for Financial Assistance to Voluntary and Community Organisations, November 2002.
- 17.2 Review of Grant Policy Cabinet June 2016.