

**HITCHIN COMMITTEE
7 MARCH 2017**

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

AGENDA ITEM No.

7

TITLE OF REPORT: GRANTS & COMMUNITY UPDATE

REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF FINANCE POLICY & GOVERNANCE

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 conform 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 Hitchin Area Committee budget for 2016/17 as set out in Appendix A
- 2.2 The Committee considers the request for £2,400 to Clean Up Hitchin as outlined in 8.1.1 and Appendix B
- 2.3 The Committee considers the request for £3,135 to the Living Room as outlined in paragraph 8.1.2 and Appendix C
- 2.4 The Committee considers the request for £1,212 to the Hitchin Allotment Association as outlined in 8.1.3 Appendix D
- 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 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 of the Corporate Plan.

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 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 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 £11,400.
The budget for 2016/17 was £19,600 as outlined in Appendix A.
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.

This equates to a total of **£20,697** currently available and if all grant funding requested at this meeting is agreed this will result in a total spend of £6,747.
This leaves £13,950 to carry over for the 2017/18 financial year.

8. PROJECT/ ACTIVITY/ SCHEME DETAILS

8.1 Grant Applications

8.1.1 Clean Up Hitchin

Clean Up Hitchin are requesting £2,400 grant funding towards their 2017 project outlined below. The total cost of the project is estimated to be £3,364 and they will be using the remaining £964 carried over from funding received from Hitchin Area Committee budgets in March 2016. The underspend occurred due to the additional business sponsorship of last year's event.

Following on from the success of the Hitchin Art Binstallation in the summer of 2016 Clean Up Hitchin is keen to repeat the project, albeit with some changes. The 2016 Art Binstallation was successful in raising awareness of the Clean Up Hitchin project, instigating a wider discussion on litter in the town, brightening up the centre, putting a smile on people's faces and adding extra bin capacity over the summer.

It was difficult to measure the absolute impact on litter levels as there is no baseline for similar periods and litter picking through the town does not happen on a specific daily schedule so accurate litter counting is virtually impossible. However, anecdotally areas in which they were situated seemed cleaner. Most importantly it was a brilliant launch for Clean Up Hitchin, putting the project 'on the map'.

Clean Up Hitchin wish to repeat the binstallation as they believe that higher visibility, fantastic looking bins are more likely to be used and thus contribute to a less littered town. They will become a talking point, part of Hitchin 'furniture' and further amplify the message that they aspire to be a clean, green community. However, to work this year, two key elements do require change:

1. They hope to purchase 'Copperfield' bin shells manufactured in one bright colour as painted bin shells chip and scrape easily regardless of paint type used. Shells are subject to minimum orders hence the need to work with one bright colour.
2. It's unlikely they'll be able to place temporary bins in the town centre again as it contradicts the dual bin recycling strategy which was introduced to the area last year. They would also like to identify an approach to measuring their impact, if possible. In short the proposal is as follows:
 - a. Purchase 12 bin shells in either bright green or yellow.
 - b. Wrap them in designs from local artists and designers, created to really compliment whichever base colour we choose.
 - c. Place them at the locations, most are outside the immediate town centre but on high footfall routes, simply swapping out the existing Copperfield shells for the new 'binstallation 2017' shells = no additional emptying costs.
 - d. At the same time they will consider part-wrapping some of the dual bins over summer to compliment the launch of the project.

Clean Up Hitchin would have the choice of leaving the bins in situ for much longer. They could even be permanent, under which circumstance they would endeavour to change the wraps once a year, perhaps on an annual theme. This would present an opportunity to involve schools, new designers or other community groups in later designs.

Building on this idea, they envisage engaging with local primary schools, and running short educational anti-litter workshops. Each would then be given the opportunity to design their own bin wrap for 2018 launch.

8.1.2 The Living Room

The Living Room provides support to adults (18+) and their families across Hertfordshire to break free from the cycle of addiction. They achieve this aim via the provision of the following core activities:

- Unlimited abstinence-based treatment to approximately 280 adults per year suffering from substance (e.g. drugs and alcohol) addictions and/or behavioural addictions (e.g. eating disorders, obsessive-compulsive behaviours, self-harm, gambling, etc.).
- Unlimited group therapy and support for approximately 80 family and friends per year, enabling them to identify and take care of their own needs and stop behaviours that enable another's addiction.
- An Ofsted registered Happy Days crèche (at their Stevenage centre), which enables parents to access treatment and safeguard the needs and development milestones of each child
- Parenting programmes and workshops that support parents to become healthy parents and role-models
- Community awareness-raising about addiction and its impact on families

The total cost of the project is calculated at £8,959 and the Living Room are requesting £6,270 grant funding towards the cost they are funding the balance from their own budgets via fundraising events and donations.

As the project is covering both Hitchin and Letchworth the amount is being split 50/50 which equates to £3,135 from each Committee budget.

The funding will enable the operation of an 'Addiction Recovery for Ethnic Minorities Project', in partnership with North Herts Ethnic Minority Forum.

Project aims to provide adults from ethnic minority groups with the signposting, support and treatment they need to overcome substance (e.g. drugs and alcohol) and/or behavioural addictions (e.g. eating disorders, obsessive compulsive behaviours, self-harm, gambling, etc.).

Project will last for 12 months (1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018) and the objectives of the project are as follows:

- i. Project Planning Group will establish a project planning group constituting staff from The Living Room and staff from Herts Ethnic Minority Forum. This group will meet quarterly to oversee all project planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting.
- ii. To monitor and evaluate progress using NHS recognised outcome measures, utilising statistical data from a bespoke client management database, project feedback forms, testimonies, and individual care plans.
- iii. They will produce an end of project evaluation report which will highlight lessons learned, including best practice recommendations for treating individuals from ethnic minority groups for addiction. This will be an entirely new piece of work for the county and we will share the report with commissioners and other addiction treatment services.

In order to promote the project culturally sensitive promotional materials (flyers and posters) will be designed and printed in order to promote the project and its launch event.

The publicity will be developed with the expertise of North Herts Ethnic Minority Forum and distributed to the following community services in Hitchin and Letchworth: GP surgeries, community centres, children centres, places of worship, health/social care community teams (e.g. social workers, health visitors, Families First teams, and community psychiatric nurses), and voluntary sector providers (e.g. Mind, Turning Point, Carers in Hertfordshire, Home Start, North Herts Sanctuary, CGL Spectrum). Electronic versions will be distributed via their own and North Herts Ethnic Minority Forum's, email networks, e-newsletters and websites. Ongoing awareness of the project and its launch event will include: weekly social media activity and regular newspaper articles and radio interviews.

The project launch event will take place (on a weekday afternoon) at North Herts Ethnic Minority Forum for service representatives and members of the public. This event will include talks from individuals in recovery from addiction, information displays and leaflets about addiction and the opportunity to talk to counsellors in long term recovery from addiction and experienced in treating addictions.

The core project activity will constitute weekly 1:1 addiction recovery treatment (not time-limited) for adults from ethnic minority groups suffering from addiction. This treatment will be delivered by a qualified counsellor in long-term recovery from addiction either at North Herts Ethnic Minority Forum's premises, or a more discrete location (such as the client's own home), as required. Individuals will be able to refer themselves for treatment and counselling, or could be referred by their GP/support service. Use will be made of the pool of volunteer counsellors in long-term recovery from addiction to manage times of high demand.

The project will be based at North Herts Ethnic Minority Forum, and include community outreach within Hitchin, and Letchworth.

8.1.3 Hitchin Youth Allotment

Hitchin Youth Allotment (HiYA) is a small youth project resource based at Old Hale Way allotment site where children, along with their parents, youth leaders or teachers, can learn about growing fruit and vegetables and get involved in a really hands on way. It is not a club in itself but a resource that will be managed by Hitchin Allotment Association (HAA) for existing clubs to use on a regular and structured basis and for schools. They are seeking funds to assist in the set up.

HiYA established in November 2016 to start preparation work. The plot (that North Hertfordshire District Council Offices have agreed to provide for this use) will begin actively in March 2017. HAA has been running for many years, an association for the benefit of Hitchin allotmenters. HiYA is an initial outreach project.

Hitchin Youth Allotment (HiYA) is in set up mode, due to start in March 2017 and have completed initial ground works on a voluntary basis and through donations from local builders and landowners/stables.

HAA are now seeking funding to complete preparation work including a shed for storage, shelter and for indoor activity/training, as well as tools and other equipment. Details are set out below.

Once set up, the ongoing costs should be minimal and the project should be self sufficient, because all constructed work will last for at least ten years (probably much more) and tools will be used year after year.

Children in Hitchin and the surrounding area will benefit from the project. HAA have commitment from The Priory School for this year, especially focussed on pupils supported by their SENCO co-ordinator, likely to be around 8-10 pupils on a fortnightly basis. In addition they have a strong interest from Hitchin Guide and Cub groups.

The aim of the project will be to connect children with the food they eat by growing it themselves.

HAA are keen to attract "harder to reach" children who might not otherwise have access to this sort of opportunity and the first year link up with The Priory School is fantastic from that perspective. Children will be involved in deciding what to grow. This will develop their decision making and confidence, also their interpersonal skills.

There is the likelihood of a link to achievement of badges, for example for Cubs, Scouts and Guides.

The project will be free for those involved allowing for access to the project for the whole community.

The project will connect young people and others with the land and develop their understanding and respect for environmental issues.

It is hoped to link up with other community gardening activities to demonstrate how they can be fun and accessible; for example, by growing giant pumpkins for the Pirton Pumpkin Festival and participation in Hitchin Festival.

It also provides a nice way of creating intergenerational links as existing allotment holders tend to be rather older! But they are enthusiastic about the plot being used in this way and getting involved.

HiYA plan to publicise the Youth Allotment via an active local media campaign to share the insights and benefits of those directly involved.

Shed/base (buy and put up)	£700
or	
Shed/base (buy and self assemble)	£450
Timber for path edging and posts	£100
Bark chippings for paths etc	Free
Fork and spade set x 3	£ 80
Hand tools	£ 50

Gloves	£ 50
Kneelers	£ 20
Wellingtons (for children without)	£ 60
Seeds and other plants	£ 30
Travel expenses	£ 30

Total inc. small contingency £1,250 or £1000

The HAA have a grant application presently being considered by the Hitchin Youth Trust of £500 towards the costs and they are requesting a further £1,212 towards the start up of the HiYA project.

8.2 Update on grants previously awarded

8.2.1 Hitchin Town Band

Outlined below an excerpt from an email received by Keith Birch the Treasurer of the Hitchin Town Band providing feedback on the grant they received in March 2016.

After an extremely busy and successful anniversary year, the band finally completed the commemorative CD just in time for a launch at our Christmas concert on 10th December.

Recording took place on 15th and 16th October at Hitchin Girls' School. We had originally intended to record at Kingshott School but a double booking by the school forced us to change venue at short notice. Unfortunately, this added to our costs but the Girls' School proved to be an excellent venue.

In the very limited time that the CD has been available we have sold approximately 100 units at £10/unit. I will not have an accurate figure until we get back together in the New Year. We are confident that we will break even over the summer and hope to make a modest profit by the end of next year.

So far, feedback from those that have bought the CD has been excellent and we are very pleased with the overall package, which includes a booklet detailing the history of the band. I have posted a copy to your office for any of the councillors who might be interested.

On behalf of Hitchin Band, I would like to thank the Council for their generous grant, which has been a great help in completing this project to provide an enduring record of Hitchin Band in its 150th year. Best regards, Keith Birch.

8.2.2 Hitchin Stroke Group

The area committee grant has enabled the group to operate for another year. They have two more members. They are considering submitting an application at the next meeting in May 2017. Officers have advised that although the application may be compliant with current criteria the group would be not be able to apply in the following financial year 2018/19 and organisers will need to source alternative funding streams.

8.3 Community Engagement

- The Youth Connexions Youth Club based at Coffee Mill on John Barker Place and funded partly by Hitchin Youth Trust will be moving this month to the youth wing of the new Westmill Community Centre.
- Resolve Drug and Alcohol counselling service have had a donation of old IT equipment and furniture from the Authority.

- The YOR radio project is now broadcasting live, the North Herts youth council are also involved and undertaking training at present. They are looking to expand the show to Saturday afternoons.
- Bancroft Project are in discussion with Hitchin Churches together to take over the service to provide food to homeless / rough sleepers at Sunday lunch times.
- Advising Old Hale Way allotment association on involving the wider community in a gardening project using allotment space donated by NHDC.
- In addition, have two other groups looking at community horticultural projects and these have been put in contact to initiate partnership working where applicable.

8.4 **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 powers to do anything:-
- An individual may generally do
 - Anywhere in the UK or elsewhere
 - For a commercial purpose or otherwise, for a charge or without a charge
 - Without the need to demonstrate that it will benefit the authority, its area or person's resident or present 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 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 All projects that are assigned area committee funding are assessed to ensure that they do not negatively impact on any part of the local community. The only deviation to this is where a minority or marginalised group may specifically receive funding or allocation of resources to address a particular area of need or 'gap' in provision. In this instance this applies to the grant funding requests for The Living room and Hitchin Youth Allotment.

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 Clean Up Hitchin – Grant Report
- 15.3 Appendix C The Living Room – Grant Report
- 15.4 Appendix D Hitchin Allotment Association – Grant Report

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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