

LETCHWORTH AREA COMMITTEE
12 JUNE 2013

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

AGENDA ITEM No.

10

TITLE OF REPORT : CHAMPION NEWS & FINANCE REPORT

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 delegated budgets.
- 1.2 To bring to the Committee's attention details of recent requests received for Area Committee Development Discretionary Grant Funding made by community groups and local organisations.
- 1.3 To advise the Committee of the activities and schemes with which the Community Development 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 Budgets and Visioning Budgets as set out in Appendix 1. (To follow.)
- 2.2 The Committee considers grant funding of £300 to Young People of the Year Award as outlined in 8.1
- 2.3 That the Committee considers grant funding of £500 to Cortex towards hall hire and public liability costs as agreed in principle at the meeting held on 13th March 2013, but which could not be agreed at the time as the committee was not quorate.
- 2.4 That the Committee considers grant a funding request of £830 to Jackie's Drop In towards the cost of purchasing tables and chairs for their dining area as outlined in 8.2. (Appendix 2)
- 2.5 That the Committee considers grant funding of £1022 towards the cost of equipment and learning resources for the Apna Punjabi School as outlined in 8.3. (Appendix 3)

- 2.6 That the Committee considers a grant funding request of £758 towards the cost of installing a CCTV mast in West View in order to counteract ongoing anti-social behaviour as outlined in 8.4 (Appendix 4)
- 2.7 That the Committee endorses the actions taken by the Community Development Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being for Letchworth Garden City.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To ensure the Committee is kept informed of the work of the Community Development 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 and the guidance in the Grants procedure.
- 3.3 The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims and Strategic Priorities of the Council.
- 3.4 Production of this report is a requirement of the Corporate Plan in which the Community Development Officer is required to produce a formal report to the Area Committee 6 occasions per annum in line with the Civic Calendar.

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 raised 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 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 1 Area Committee Budget Spreadsheet, which relates to the Area Committee budget balances for the current financial year 2012/13.
- 7.2 The spreadsheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial year 2011/12 including balances and past expenditure relating to the allocated and un-allocated Area Capital Visioning Budgets available to the Committee.

8. PROJECT/ ACTIVITY/ SCHEME DETAILS

8.1 Young People of the Year Award

This application has been deferred from the meeting held on 13th March in order to allow the applicant to present to the members of the Letchworth Area Committee.

Young People of the Year Award is a Hertfordshire wide campaign that aims to improve the image of young people in the media and by society as a whole. Rewarding the good work that many young people carry out provides positive role models for others and improves the public perception of Youth.

The organisers work closely with Letchworth Schools, Highfield and Fearnhill to encourage young people to take part in voluntary activities, help others and improve the lives of people around them. The organisation is requesting £300 of grant funding towards providing sessions in Schools.

The organisation is applying to all five NHDC Area Committees and requesting £300 from each. They have also gained sponsorship from businesses such as Johnson Matthey, Tesco, Runwood Homes, Mitsubishi Electric and in kind contributions from the University of Hertfordshire and Elstree Studios. They have also been successful in gaining funding from other local authorities within Hertfordshire. This sponsorship will contribute to the project as a whole, which covers the entire county and culminates in a prestigious awards ceremony to be held in either Elstree or Hatfield.

8.2 Jackie's Drop In

This purely volunteer led project is requesting £830 in grant funding to cover the cost of purchasing tables and chairs for their dining room. Jackie's Drop In provides a centre for Adults with learning disabilities to socialise in an informal but safe environment. They provide facilities for people to bring in and prepare their own food and eat together at lunch times. Their service is being used by approximately 100 people per week and the need for somewhere comfortable to sit down and eat has become increasingly necessary. The centre is run entirely by volunteers and they continually fund raise to cover the running costs of the centre. They receive assistance from the Letchworth GC Heritage Foundation who provide the premises at St Michaels House on Norton Way North. They also sell recycled clothes and bric-a-brac to raise funds.

8.3 Apna Punjabi School

The School runs from the Sikh Temple based at Irvin House on Icknield Way. They offer Punjabi classes to anyone aged 8 years and up who would like to learn to read, write and speak Punjabi. Volunteers teach students to GCSE level. They are requesting £1022 of grant funding towards the cost of learning resources and cupboards for storage. The resources are learning materials, flip chart stands and pads and GCSE sample exam papers. This class helps to promote community cohesion through education of both language and culture.

Members may recall that the group last applied in June 2011 and received £500 towards equipment to start up the classes.

8.4 West View Anti Social Behaviour (ASB)

Over the last four years ASB has been reported in the crescent shape in West View. This has taken the form of; motor cycles revving, large groups of youths gathering, verbal abuse to residents, litter, footballs hitting cars and other related incidents.

During this timeframe numerous interventions have been tried, including police patrols, ASB 72 hours notices issued (youths are banned from the area for 72 hours), Environmental Action Days (EAD) involving all the partner agencies, warning notices threatening repossession to some tenants, personal interviews with tenants, area surveys and signage. Unfortunately, the ASB continues to be reported as outlined in the table below using the Police reports. North Herts Homes have progressed plans

for the redesign of the grass area to include planting in order to deter ball games and enhance the area.

Following discussions between partner stakeholders, local police officers, North Herts homes Neighbourhood and ASB Officers and Community Development and ASB Officers from NHDC it is felt that a mobile CCTV mast is a preferable option in order that a mobile camera can be placed there to deter ASB and to gather valuable evidence against offenders. The cost of installing a mast to house a mobile CCTV Camera is £1,136. North Herts Homes have agreed to cover one third of the cost which equates to £378.30. Members are requested to consider grant funding of £758.

West View - G2D	
Year	Number of ASB incidents
2009	14
2010	26
2011	24
2012	35
2013 (01/01/2013 - 23/04/2013)	8

8.5 Letchworth & District Astronomy Society

A fast track grant of £500 was awarded to the Letchworth & District Astronomy Society towards the cost of equipment and marketing costs to run free workshops aimed at the local community. The series of seminars covered the basic laws of physics behind the development of the universe. The seminars were organised following requests from the public following the Star Gazing live sessions that the group held as part of the BBC initiative to encourage the public to take an active interest in science and astronomy.

8.6 Arch Community Group

A fast track grant of £450 was awarded to the Arch Community Group towards the cost of Letchworth's entry into Anglia In Bloom. The funds are required to cover transport costs and refreshments during the Judges visit on 9th July and a presentation awards ceremony later this year. This project works in close partnership with NHDC, the LGCHF, North Herts Homes, Town Centre Partnership, local schools, voluntary and community groups. It has assisted all partners to work together during the year to continually improve the environment of the Town, to educate and encourage people to take care of their local environment.

8.7 Letchworth Action for Young People (LEAYP) Town Centre Event

LEAYP are organising an event to promote local clubs and organisations that provide activities for young people in the town. The event is called LEAYP 2 It! and takes place on Saturday June 15th in Leys Square. This coincides with the Letchworth Festival and is promoted via the Letchworth Festival programme. The event will consist of information stalls, taster sessions, demonstrations and live music.

8.8 Highways Matters

It is proposed that a section entitled ' Highways Matters ' is included within the Area Champion's News 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 includes discretionary grant aid/financial 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 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 2012/13 baseline budget has stayed the same as the previous year.
- 10.2 The former MoU Budget is subject to a 7.1% reduction each year through to financial year 2015/16.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no 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 Development 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 1 To Follow
15.2 Appendix 2 Jackie's Drop In – Grant Report
15.3 Appendix 3 Apna Punjabi School – Grant Report
15.4 Appendix 4 CCTV mast West View – Grant Report
15.5 Appendix 5 Area Committee Summary Update 2012 - 2013

16. CONTACT OFFICERS

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17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

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