

**\*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

**AGENDA ITEM No.**

**8**

**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 Budget and Visioning Budget as set out in Appendix 1.
- 2.2 That the Committee considers grant funding of £943 to Letchworth Amateur Swimming Club to cover funding training courses for volunteer swimming teachers (as outlined in 8.1 and appendix 2).
- 2.3 That the Committee considers grant funding of £1,500 to Letchworth Art Centre towards the cost of a performance by young people to commemorate the centenary of World War 1 (as outlined in 8.2 and appendix 3).
- 2.4 That the Committee considers grant funding of £1,000 to REMAP towards the purchase of materials to cover the manufacture of aids for the disabled people in Letchworth. (as outlined in 8.3 and appendix 4).
- 2.5 That the Committee considers grant funding of £1,500 to Box Cleve towards the cost of running non-contact boxing training for children with behavioural issues. (as outlined in 8.4 and appendix 5).

- 2.6 That the Committee considers grant funding of £1,500 to Letchworth Garden City Festival Steering Committee towards the cost of putting on the Proms in the Park event and to support small groups to host other linked events. (as outlined in 8.5 and Appendix 6.)
- 2.7 That the Committee discuss the frequency of Area Committee meetings during the next Civic year as suggested by members at the Letchworth Area Committee meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> November 2013.
- 2.8 That the Committee considers awarding support funding in relation to any potential Highways schemes as proposed and discussed under section 8.6 of this report.
- 2.9 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 Priorities of the Council.
- 3.4 Production of this report is a requirement of the 'Priorities for the district' 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 2013/14.
- 7.2 The spreadsheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial year 2012/13 including balances and past expenditure relating to the allocated and un-allocated Area Capital Visioning Budgets available to the Committee.
- 7.3 The current level of unallocated funds within the Area Committee's 2013/14 Area Grant Budget is **£19,630**
- 7.4 There are no funds within the Area Committee's 2012/13 Area Grant Budget that remain uncommitted.
- 7.5 The current level of unallocated funds within the Area Committee's MoU Budget is **£1,680**

At the last Area Committee meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2013 Members asked how the uncommitted MoU funds could be utilised.

Although it is not possible to physically relocate them to sit within the Committee's Discretionary Budget, the funds can be awarded in the same way as any other grant budget adhering to the authority's current grant criteria.

- 7.6 The current level of unallocated funds within the Area Committee's Capital Visioning Grant Budget is **£5,601**

## 8. PROJECT/ ACTIVITY/ SCHEME DETAILS

### 8.1 Letchworth Amateur Swimming Club

This group are seeking £943 in grant funding which will cover 50% funding towards the cost of training 4 young volunteers in teaching aquatics. The remaining 50% of the required funds has been provided by the Hertfordshire Amateur Swimming Association. The benefit to the community will be the long term sustainability of the club to continue to provide coaching sessions and lessons to local children & young people.

The club has been established for almost 80 years. The service it provides is essential in promoting healthy living and exercise to Letchworth children & young people. By providing teacher training to four young volunteers they also promote a sense of civic responsibility as well as ensuring the sustainability of the club for future generations.

The grant report for this project is outlined in Appendix 2.

### 8.2 Letchworth Arts Centre

Letchworth Art Centre is seeking £1,500 in grant funding in order to take an existing project into local schools. This project will engage young people in history through a performance that commemorates the centenary of The Great War scheduled to take place in June next year.

It will involve up to 120 young people from schools across Letchworth, primarily Highfield participation in various elements of the project. They will work with participating professionals such as teachers, West End choreographers and project managers, to learn and achieve each department's goal which will contribute and play vital parts in the final performances.

The Project runs outside of school hours. Street performances are also planned throughout the rehearsal process as taster sessions for the public. These will be delivered in the run up to the final performances which are scheduled to run over 3 days in July 2014.

If successful the funding will be used to tour the project around local schools, offering young people an opportunity to participate in workshops, both educational and performance based. This will help to reach a wider audience, continuing to develop young people's understanding of their local heritage.

The grant report for this project is outlined in Appendix 3.

### 8.3 **REMAP**

REMAP is a charity, working through a nationwide network of dedicated volunteers.

Members of the Charity use their ingenuity and skills to help people with disabilities to achieve much-desired independence in some aspect of their lives, or to enjoy leisure opportunities previously closed to them.

Remap's unique pieces of special equipment are tailor-made and given free to the people who need them.

REMAP are requesting £1,000 grant funding towards the cost of design and manufacture practical equipment for the elderly and disabled where suitable commercial products are not available.

From Jan to June 2013 Remap undertook 20 projects in Letchworth. It is expected that approximately 80 people will benefit from this service in the Town in the next financial year. This organisation provides a valuable service to the district and many of their clients are based in Letchworth. This includes the MS Centre.

The funding is required to cover the cost of design and materials needed to make bespoke aids for elderly and disabled people that would not be available on the commercial market. The group constantly provide presentations to groups to publicise their work and raise money for projects. The improvement that their equipment provides to the lives of people they assist is invaluable

The grant report for this project is outlined in Appendix 4.

### 8.4 **Box Cleva**

Box Cleva are requesting £1,500 grant funding towards the cost of continuing the project in Letchworth for a further 12 months.

One third of the funding required is being provided by North Herts Homes and the remainder is being sought from the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation.

Box Cleve has been successfully running for the last year based at the Garden City Academy. Children from the ages of 7 to 14 are referred either from ASB Officers, Police or Schools if it is felt that they would benefit from the project. The project provides education on health and fitness using non-contact boxing training as a focus. This is particularly useful for children with anger and discipline issues who may also not have strong male role models in their every day lives.

The project will run for 40 weeks during term times, after school on Wednesday afternoons. The instructors are serving Fire Service Officers. Volunteers are being recruited from the local community to help with registration at the start of each session. Children attending will be signposted on to other local sports groups, clubs and associations in order to keep them engaged with healthy, positive activities therefore reducing the chances of becoming involved in anti social behaviour and crime. The funding will be used towards the purchase of much needed new equipment for the Letchworth project.

The grant report for this project is outlined in Appendix 5.

#### **8.5 Letchworth Festival Steering Committee**

The group is seeking £2,000 grant funding which is split into two distinct areas. £1,500 to put on the Proms In the Park event, which is a day of music and dance provided by local schools and music groups. This event has proved very popular in previous years attracting an audience of approximately 500 people from the local community.

In addition the group is requesting £500 in order for them to provide support and assistance to individual groups who wish to put on their own events in order to promote their activities and be part of the overall Festival Fortnight.

The Letchworth Festival Steering Committee are in the process of applying for linked funding to cover other aspects of the two week programme of events in the Town. They are requesting £5,000 from LGCHF, £2,000 from the Garden Square Shopping Centre and £1,000 from HCC Member Locality Budget. They will also utilise some reserves from profit held over from the 2013 Festival.

The grant report for this project is outlined in Appendix 6.

#### **8.6 Highways Matters**

It was agreed 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 include 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 1<sup>st</sup> October 2010, a major piece of legislation. The Act also created a new Public Sector Equality Duty, which came into force on the 5<sup>th</sup> 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 Letchworth Area Committee Budget Report 2013/14
- 15.2 Appendix 2 Letchworth Amateur Swimming Club – Grant Report
- 15.3 Appendix 3 Letchworth Art Centre – Grant Report
- 15.4 Appendix 4 REMAP – Grant Report
- 15.5 Appendix 5 Box Cleva – Grant Report
- 15.6 Appendix 6 Letchworth Garden City Festival Steering Committee – Grant Report
- 15.7 Appendix 7 Area Committee Summary Update 2013 - 2014

## **16. CONTACT OFFICERS**

- 16.1 Author: Claire Morgan Community Development Officer – Letchworth  
Telephone: 01462 474226  
Email: [claire.morgan@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:claire.morgan@north-herts.gov.uk)
- 16.2 Contributors: Shah Mohammed, Assistant Accountant  
Telephone: 01462 474240  
EMail: [shah.mohammed@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:shah.mohammed@north-herts.gov.uk)
- Liz Green, Head of Policy & Community Services  
Telephone: 01462 474230  
Email: [liz.green@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:liz.green@north-herts.gov.uk)

## **17. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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