

**LETCHWORTH COMMITTEE**  
**11 MARCH 2015**

**\*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

**AGENDA ITEM No.**

**10**

**TITLE OF REPORT: COMMUNITY UPDATE AND GRANT APPLICATIONS**

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 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 Budget and Visioning Budget as set out in Appendix 1.
- 2.2 That the Committee considers grant funding of £480 to the Letchworth Town Twinning Association towards the cost of hosting an event in May for visitors from the French twin town Chagny as outlined in 8.1, appendix 2.
- 2.3 That the committee considers grant funding of £1200 to the Rotary of Letchworth Garden City towards the cost of holding the Big Lunch event on 7 June 2015 as outlined in 8.2 appendix 3.
- 2.4 That the committee considers reallocating £5000 from the capital visioning budget to the Jackmans Community Association towards the cost of renovation of the Old Library Annex as outlined in 8.3.
- 2.5 That the committee considers grant funding of £1500 (being the largest amount the officer is able to recommend) to Letchworth Town Centre Partnership towards the cost of two large scale town centre events to be held in May and November as outlined below in 8.4 appendix 4.

- 2.6 That the Committee considers awarding support funding in relation to any potential Highways schemes as proposed and discussed under section 8.5 of this report and discuss the proposal put forward at the meeting held on Wednesday 3 December 2014.
- 2.7 That the Committee endorses the actions taken by the Community 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 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 policy.
- 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 'Priorities for the District'.
- 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 a minimum of four 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 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 Spread sheet, which relates to the Area Committee budget balances for the current financial year 2014/15.
- 7.2 The spread sheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial year 2013/14 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 2014/15 Area Grant Budget is **£5153**.
- 7.4 There is **£220** funds carried forward from within the Area Committee's 2013/14 Area Grant Budget that has been allocated towards the cost of producing a leaflet for Councillors Surgeries.
- 7.5 The Area Committee's Capital Visioning Grant Budget of £5000 is now fully allocated to Jackmans Community Association (please refer to 8.3)

## **8. PROJECT/ ACTIVITY/ SCHEME DETAILS**

### **8.1 Letchworth Garden City Town Twinning Association**

The Town Twinning Association will be hosting a visit from the twin town of Chagny from 14 to 18 May this year. They are requesting £480 in grant funding towards the cost of tour guides and entrance fees for trips to London and Oxford.

The total cost of the visit to the Association will be £1730 and they hope to raise £1250 from the Burgundy Evening which is a fund raising event the group organise each year at Knights Templar School in order to support the Town Twinning Activities.

The grant report for this project is outlined in Appendix 2

### **8.2 Rotary Big Lunch**

£1200 grant funding is requested for the Big Lunch event on Sunday June 7th on Howard Park.

The Big Lunch was an initiative launched in 2009 and originally founded by Tim Smit the Chief executive of the Eden Project in partnership with the Big Lottery. The aim of these events is: 'to encourage people across the UK to have lunch with their neighbours, once a year as a simple act of community, friendship and fun.'

The Rotary Club of Letchworth Garden City have been organising this event in the Town for the last three years.

Funding is required to cover the cost of marketing and publicity, transport costs and hiring a marquee.

An estimated 1000 to 1500 people attended last years event and depending on the weather in 2015 it is hoped to attract a similar sized audience.

The grant report for this project is outlined in Appendix 3

### 8.3 **Jackmans Community Association Capital Visioning Grant**

£5000 from Capital Visioning was allocated to the Jackmans Community Association towards renovations to the Old Library Annex in March 2014 with two conditions. Firstly, that match funding would be sourced and secondly that if the funding was not able to be released within 12 months the grant would be reviewed by the Committee.

The first condition has been met with the securing of Section 106 funds to the sum of £29,000.. However, the Association are in the process of setting up a separate bank account to hold funds specifically for the renovation project. At the time of writing the Communities Officer has not been provided with the appropriate bank details in order to release the £5000.

As the grant is now up for review, members will be required to formally decide on whether they wish the allocated amount to remain as such in the Committee budgets.

### 8.4 **Letchworth Town Centre Events**

The Letchworth Town Centre Partnership (LTCP) is requesting £5000 of funding towards two major town centre events which are: Food & Garden Festival 9th & 10th May 2015, and the Christmas programme, which includes the Christmas Lights Switch-On event – 21st November. Funding will enable the creation of strong marketing outreach campaigns for all events that will help build a sense of anticipation and capture people's imaginations both locally and regionally and drive people to the town.

The events have proven very popular in the past and the LTCP are continuing to drive improvements and value for money. This year, for example, they are working closely with Love Food Roadshows to increase sponsorship of the Food & Garden Festival and adding a great deal more on the gardening side. They will also be featuring more local chefs this year with an emphasis on diversity and culture in cooking, to increase spaces for the community to picnic together and increase dwell time in the town centre.

For Christmas LTCP will continue to expand the theme introduced last year, which was the Letchworth Garden City Winter Festival. The event, which ran for the whole day boasted the highest footfall of any Christmas event and the addition of the Land Train proved to be extremely popular. This year the extra sponsorship that it is hoped to attract will improve the marketing reach, with the objective being to become self-sustaining. However, this is expected to take another 2-3 years.

Both events will have a significant online presence through websites and social media channels as well as traditional print media. Each event will have a marketing campaign that ensures that people will know specific event timings, locations and details through free brochures, paid for advertising in local and regional press, window and display posters, and promotional banners.

Retailers benefit from the increased footfall and dwell time that town centre events generate with many reporting new customers through their doors and increased sales at key events in 2014. Footfall counters showed that shopper and visitor numbers increase on days where free events are being held. Strong marketing outreach campaigns for each of these events should help reposition Letchworth as a vibrant lively town within the region benefitting not just the town centre but residents and visitors alike. LTCP are focusing heavily on these two events with the view of turning them into major destinations to also bring in external footfall. Christmas 2014 proved this effort to work in that the town had footfall from as far away as France coming specifically for the event as well as from other counties in the UK.

The events attract significant PR and resident engagement. NHDC will be clearly identified as one of the key events sponsors and subsequently this will demonstrate to the public NHDC's commitment to the town's wellbeing and working in partnership for the betterment of the town. The events are unique in being large scale, completely free for participants and open to all to enjoy.

(The grant report for this project is outlined in Appendix 4)

## 8.5 **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.

At the meeting of the Letchworth Committee held on Wednesday 3 December it was agreed that members would discuss the option for Letchworth Committee to set aside £5,000 from the Discretionary Budget for Highways matters.

This money to be allocated to projects funded by County Councillors from their Locality Budgets. It is suggested that the £5,000 be allocated as follows:

- £2,000 towards projects funded by County Councillor Kercher
- £2,000 towards projects funded by County Councillor Hone
- £1,000 towards projects funded by County Councillor Muir

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.

Members are reminded that the budget policy for NHDC is that the Authority will not fund from its budget services which are the statutory responsibility of another statutory body; In this case, that would be Herts County Council as the highways provider. Area Committee grants are required to be spent in accord with the budget policy of NHDC under both the Council's Constitution Section 16 Budget and Policy framework (below)

### **16.3 Decisions outside the Budget or Policy Framework**

16.3.1 Subject to the provisions of paragraph 16.4 (Urgent Decisions Outside The Budget or Policy Framework) any Committees, whether they be: the Cabinet, Area Committees, Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Finance, Audit & Risk Committee; or individual members of the Cabinet, or any Officers may only take decisions which are in line with the Budget and Policy Framework. If any of these bodies or persons wishes to make a decision which is contrary to the Policy Framework, or contrary to or not wholly in accordance with the Budget approved by Full Council, then that decision may only be taken by the full Council, subject to paragraph 16.4 below.

16.3.2 It is the responsibility of the decision-taker to take advice from the Monitoring Officer and/or the Chief Finance Officer as to whether the decision they want to make would be contrary to the Policy Framework, or contrary to or not wholly in accordance with the Budget.

## 8.6 **Update on Letchworth Town Wide Parking Review**

Please note the following progress on the Letchworth town wide parking review. All schemes listed below were outlined in Appendix A to the Officers Report, and were agreed by the Committee at its meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2014.

Bedford Road Junction protection: - The double yellow line restrictions have been implemented and were enforceable from the 26<sup>th</sup> of January. This was the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of the programme.

Officers have now appointed consultants to assist in progressing the following proposed schemes over the next 6 to 9 months:

- Introducing junction protection (Double Yellow Lines) in Norton Way South between Pixmore Way and Baldock Road. Following pre-consultation discussions with members it was agreed that officers proceed ahead with junction protection only. Formal consultation on the Draft TRO will start in March 2015.
- Nevells Road/Cross Street and the Quadrant Area – allow for shared parking within the current resident permit parking scheme. Relevant members have been informed and Pre Consultation will end on the 20<sup>th</sup> of February.
- Introducing limited waiting at the layby on the western side of Norton Way South at the junction with Station Road. Pre consultation to commence in March 2015 for up to 3 weeks.
- Removing the Saturday parking restriction on the northern side of Icknield Way East between the Esso Petrol Filling Station and Cromwell Road. Pre-consultation to commence in March 2015 for up to 3 weeks.
- Extending the double yellow line restriction in Radburn Way just beyond its junction with Quinn Way. Pre Consultation to start on 24<sup>th</sup> February for two weeks.
- Extending the Rushby Mead Resident Permit Parking scheme between Hillshott and Pixmore Way. Pre-consultation to finish Friday 20<sup>th</sup> February.
- Introducing parking restrictions within the Wilbury Ward area –The consultants will take the lead on this scheme and pre-consultation is due to start imminently.

Officers will liaise with the Portfolio Holder for Policy, Transport & Green Issues, and with the relevant local and county councillors where necessary regarding the outcome of the pre-consultation exercises on the above schemes and agree the next steps in the process. Members will be kept informed on progress.

## **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, as a body, 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 2014/15 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 start of the 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 2014/15
- 15.2 Appendix 2 Letchworth Town Twinning – Grant Report
- 15.3 Appendix 3 Rotary of Letchworth Garden City – Grant Report
- 15.4 Appendix 4 Letchworth Town Partnership – Grant Report
- 15.5 Appendix 5 Area Committee Summary Update 2014 – 2015

## **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.