

LETCHWORTH COMMITTEE
29 JULY 2015

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

AGENDA ITEM No.

8

TITLE OF REPORT: GRANTS AND COMMUNITY UPDATE

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 the application for grant funding of £1,500 (being the maximum amount that the Officer can recommend) to Child UK who are requesting £1,665 Grant funding towards the cost of delivering a youth project, as outlined in 8.1, appendix 2
- 2.3 That the committee considers grant funding of £1,500 to the Wilbury Community Forum towards 5 sessions of dance and drama for children aged 6 - 12 years in the Wilbury area as outlined in 8.2, appendix 3
- 2.4 That the committee considers grant funding of £816 to Cortex towards the cost of the annual hall rental and insurance costs as outlined in 8.3, appendix 4
- 2.5 That the committee considers grant funding in principle following receipt of an application towards the St Thomas' 'Get Lunch' project to provide free lunches to families most in need once a week during the school summer holiday period as outlined in 8.4.
- 2.6 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'.

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 2015/16.
- 7.2 The spread sheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial year 2014/15 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 2015/16 Area Grant Budget is **£35,800**.
- 7.4 There is **£248** funds remaining in the carried forward amounts from within the Area Committee's 2014/15 Area Grant Budget that £220 has been allocated towards the cost of producing a leaflet for Councillors Surgeries.

8. GRANT FUNDING AND COMMUNITY UPDATE

8.1 Child UK – Grant Application

£1,665 Grant funding is requested towards the cost of delivering a youth project. The project is targeting the 7-12 and 13-19 year old age group from Letchworth, focussing on Norton Common. Meetings will be once per week for 2 hours over a 10 week period. Child UK has carried out an extensive consultation with the young people and with partners to identify those who would benefit from the project. The project will deliver a variety of exciting multi-sports such as Pop Up Tennis, Street Golf, basketball, football and dodgeball to the young people to give them something positive to do using the multi-use games area; this will attempt to counteract the recent higher level of anti-social behaviour (ASB). Youth Connexions will deliver workshops on-site engaging those watching or waiting to join in the activities. They will be delivering important information in the areas of Sexual Health, Healthy Lifestyle, and Substance Misuse Prevention. (Outlined in Appendix 2)

8.2 Wilbury Community Forum – Grant Application

£1,500 grant funding is requested for 5 sessions of dance and drama aimed at children aged 6 - 12 years in the Wilbury area. The project aims to improve health, well being and reduce obesity in children. In addition it is hoped to provide information to their parents and siblings. Volunteers are contributing time and materials to the project free of charge. This is an established group seeking to improve health, confidence and well being amongst children in the Wilbury Ward. (Outlined in Appendix 3)

8.3 Cortex

£816 Grant funding is requested for the annual hall rental and insurance costs. The group offers a meeting place to support and empower transgender, lesbian and gay people, giving them a safe environment to relax and become involved in a variety of activities. (Outlined in Appendix 4).

8.4 St Thomas' 'Get Lunch' summer project

St Thomas' Church in partnership with Wilbury School is planning to host a weekly free lunch for families most in need in the area during the 6 week summer holiday period. This will be targeted at those who are in receipt of free school meals, or on lower incomes, during term time. A lunch will be provided once a week along with advice on preparing low cost healthy meals on a budget. The Communities Officer has linked the organiser with officers in Environmental Health in order to gain advice on health and hygiene and food safety requirements.

The organiser would like the committee to consider the provision of some funds towards the project. However, they were not able to complete a grant application in time for the grant deadline for the July meeting.

If members are minded to agree some funds towards the project in principle on condition of the application form being received and processed by the Communities Officer, the funding can then be released under the delegated authority of the Portfolio Holder and Head of Policy and Community Services at the appropriate time..

8.5 Update on Jackie's Drop In

Jackie's Drop In Centre provide low cost services to support those with learning disabilities currently based at St Michaels House on Norton Way South. It is run entirely by volunteers who are organising a community funday to take place around the building including the car park to the rear located on Openshaw Way. The building is owned by the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation (LGCHF) and is due to be auctioned for redevelopment. The Centre have until February 2016 until they need to

have vacated the building. The LGCHF have offered alternative accommodation at the annex to the old Grammar School on Broadway. The new location affords more space for the Drop In Centre. The group are viewing the move as a positive step and an opportunity to develop their services further. The move will however, incur some costs and Jackie's Drop In are in the process of raising funds towards this.

The £1,000 grant funding they received from Letchworth Committee at the meeting held in June 2015 was used towards the hire of stage and sound equipment for their Fun Day on 27th June. The event was extremely well attended and the group have estimated that they raised £3,000 on the day which will be used towards the costs incurred for their imminent relocation.

8.6 Update on Jackmans Community Centre Old Library Development

The £5,000 Capital Visioning funding that was awarded by the Letchworth Committee to the project in March 2014 towards the redevelopment of the Jackmans Old Library has now been released. This has allowed the Community Association to engage the services of an architect to draw up plans. The first tranche of Section 106 monies is being drawn down for the replacement of the windows which have now been installed. The association are in the process of engaging contractors for the rest of the works.

8.7 Update on previous grants awarded

North Herts Samaritans based in Hitchin were very grateful for the grants totalling £1,200 received last July 2014, from the Area Committees of North Hertfordshire District Council, towards the cost of CCTV and ancillary wiring.

As their existing system was no longer fit for purpose and it was vitally important to have an updated system to protect visitors, volunteers and premises.

The new system is working well and all volunteers feel they are working in a much safer environment, which in turn allows them to provide a more relaxed and supportive service to those people who contact the Samaritans in distress or with feelings of suicide.

8.8 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, 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 2015/16 baseline budget has stayed the same as the previous year.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no relevant 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 Communities 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 Child UK – Grant Report
- 15.3 Appendix 3 Wilbury Community Forum – Grant Report
- 15.4 Appendix 4 Cortex – 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.