

**LETCHWORTH AREA COMMITTEE  
7 SEPTEMBER 2016**

**\*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, which confirm to the Authority's Grants Policy approved by Cabinet on June 14<sup>th</sup> 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 Development Budget and Visioning Budget for the 2016/17 financial year as set out in Appendix 1 Letchworth Area Committee budget for 2016/17.
- 2.2 That the Committee considers the provision of **£4,500**, to Howard Garden Social and Day Care Centre toward flooring required due to flood damage and replacement of automatic entrance door, as outlined 8.1.1.
- 2.3 That the Committee considers the provision of **£600** to the Imajica Theatre Company (CIC) towards the cost of putting on a Pantomime aimed at young children from disadvantaged families in Letchworth, as outlined in 8.1.2.
- 2.4 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 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 expressed in 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 raised within this report.

### **5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS**

- 5.1 Consultation with relevant 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 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 Spread sheet, which relates to the Area Committee budget balances for the current financial year 2016/17.
- 7.2 The budget for the 2016/17 financial year as outlined in in Appendix 1 was £19,500.

The amount allocated at the last meeting held in June 2016 was £5,410 leaving an amount of **£14,090**.

Dividing this amount by the three remaining meetings this financial year allows for an average of £4,696 per meeting. The total amount of compliant grant funding requested is for this meeting is £5,100.

- 7.3 There is **£248** remaining in the carried forward amounts from within the Area Committee's 2014/15 Area Grant Budget of which £220 have been allocated towards the cost of producing a leaflet for Councillors Surgeries.

## **8. GRANT FUNDING AND COMMUNITY UPDATE**

### **8.1 Grant Funding**

#### **8.1.1 Howard Garden Day Care & Social Centre**

The Howard Garden Social Centre has been the victim of flooding twice in the last year. Although the flooring was repaired under the centre's insurance, it was damaged again by further recent flooding and the insurers require the first £2,500 towards the cost of replacement vinyl flooring.

At present the floor in the main hall has been taken up and is bare concrete. This is not ideal from a health and safety perspective and also not cosmetically appealing. This is also having an effect on hirers who have cancelled bookings consequently effecting necessary revenue income.

In addition, the automatic entrance door to the Centre is no longer fully functional. This is necessary for visitors with limited mobility and effects the DDA compliance (Disability Discrimination Act 1995) of the building.

As the doors were fitted some years ago the parts needed to repair it are no longer available and therefore a completely new entrance is required. The cost of a new entrance is estimated to be in the region of £2,000.

The Howard Garden Day Care & Social Centre is run entirely by volunteers and they own the building. The centre previously in receipt of a Memorandum of Understanding, 3 year grant funding of just under £5,000. The centre has reduced its running costs by not replacing staff and covering day to day running of the centre with volunteer time.

The organisation is requesting grant funding of £4,500 from Letchworth Area Committee toward the cost of the both the new door and the flooring. However, if Members are minded to consider the provision of funding towards both or either of the two projects outlined above, this would assist the continued service provided to elderly residents of Letchworth.

(As outlined in 2.2, Appendix 2)

#### **8.1.2 Imajica Theatre Company**

Imajica Theatre Company are requesting £600 in order to create a Pantomime show aimed at families in Letchworth who find Christmas time quite a challenge, from disadvantaged children, young carers and looked after children to create magical memories and an opportunities for new experiences.

The audiences will benefit from attending a high quality artistic production specifically designed for a younger audience, in the local area and at an affordable cost compared to others pantomimes that are on offer in the area.

This community project will see the opportunity for 11 additional members of the community join the cast on stage (5 adults & 6 Youth aged 16-18) and opportunities for students/ unemployed/ retired members of the community get involved in the project off stage in stage managements, set & costume designed and front of house.

The Letchworth and Baldock District Scouts team has also agreed to participate in the project and help out front of house and with parking.

The £600 grant funding is requested in order to cover the cost of costuming for the 6 students participating in the show.

Those taking part in the production will gain valuable real life experience working with a professional theatre company and life skills through mentoring and learning new skills, plus getting additional CV material for future employment.

The event is planned to take place at the Auditorium Theatre at St Christopher's School

The event is expected to cost £19,975 the organisation are applying for the majority of the funds from the Arts Council England and at the time of writing have an application being considered for £12,035. The remaining costs will be met by in-kind contributions from Imajica Theatre Company, the Letchworth Scouts, fundraising activities and business sponsorship.

(As outlined in 2.3, Appendix 3)

## 8.2 **Community Update**

### 8.2.1 Jackie's Drop In

Jackie's Drop In (JDI) have now signed the lease for the West View building with the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation (LGCHF).

The LGCHF have undertaken considerable refurbishment of the building. JDI will be starting their own works on the building in preparation in order to make the building operational to their specific needs from end of August to end of September. They expect the new centre to be up and running by 14<sup>th</sup> October 2016

A business plan has been drawn up and sent round to the management committee for approval. When this has been agreed the £5,000 grant funding from the Letchworth Committee budget will be released towards the cost of fixtures and fittings for the new centre.

### 8.2.2 Grants Awarded in July and September 2015

The grants awarded in July 2015 were:

Child UK who were awarded £1,500 towards a 10 week youth project based on Norton Common and working in partnership with Youth Connexions. The project was both well received and attended.

Wilbury Community Forum received £1,500 towards 5 monthly sessions of dance and drama for children attending the community café as part of the Health Hart Project. The project was well attended but finished in April.

Cortex received £816 towards venue hire and insurance costs. The group no longer meet although they continue to run their website and provide support to the transgender community on a one to one basis.

### **8.3 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 power to do anything that individuals generally may do. This may be for, or otherwise than for the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident 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 In the past few years there has been no inflationary allowance to the main Area Committee Budget. From the 2016/17 financial year, a proposal was made through the council's corporate business planning process to reduce the overall amount the council awards by way of grants, both area committee and district wide, by a suggested 20%. Following member workshops, there was a request that whilst the principle of saving approximately £86k of revenue was supported, the current level of district MoUs should be retained, thus the area committee element was reduced by a greater amount.

10.2 Appendix 1 provides the detailed development 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 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 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 The projects which comprise the Community 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 for 2016/17
- 15.2 Appendix 2 Howard Garden Social Centre – Grant Report
- 15.3 Appendix 3 Imajica Theatre Company – 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 Grants Policy Cabinet Report June 2016.