

**TITLE OF REPORT: GRANTS AND COMMUNITY UPDATE**

REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF FINANCE, POLICY & GOVERNANCE

EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND RURAL AFFAIRS:  
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 **£213**, to North Herts Bee Keepers Association to assist with a project at Norton Allotments as outlined 8.1.1. Appendix 2
- 2.3 That the Committee considers the provision of **£5,057** to Letchworth Festival Steering Committee, to assist with costs towards the Proms in the Park event 2017/18 as outlined in 8.1.2. Appendix 3
- 2.4 That the Committee considers Grant Award of **£600** to Small Acts of Kindness CIC to assist with costs of sourcing and distributing Warm in Winter Gift Bags to older people living in North Herts, as outlined in 8.1.3 Appendix 4
- 2.5 That the Committee agree to the release of **£5,000** grant funding to Jackie's Drop In allocated for this use at the meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2016 as outlined in 8.1.4 Appendix 5
- 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 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 of 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 agencies/groups has taken place with regard to funding proposals for Area Committee Funds.

### **6. FORWARD PLAN**

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 2016/17.
- 7.2 The budget for the 2016/17 financial year as outlined in in Appendix 1 was £19,500. Funds remaining this financial year to be allocated by the Committee - **£9,590**.

Dividing this amount by the two remaining meetings this financial year allows for an average of £4,795 per meeting. The total amount of compliant grant funding requested for this meeting is £6,050. If all the grant applications are successful this will leave £3,540 available for the last meeting of the financial year in March 2017.

- 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 North Herts Bee Keepers Association (NHBKA)**

The NHBKA are requesting £213 grant funding. The group will be opening a new apiary on Norton Allotments. They are requesting grant funding to allow them to install wildflower beds and a wildlife pond which honeybees will use.

They were formed in 1918 and will be celebrating their centenary in 16 months time. They have over 65 members who keep beehives across North Hertfordshire. They have a number of apiaries located in and around Stevenage, Hitchin and Letchworth. They hold regular evening meetings at Mrs Howard Memorial Hall in Letchworth over the winter months when bees are quietly resting. The talks include presentations and talks from guest speakers on a wide range of subjects usually related to beekeeping. During the active season (April-September) meetings are held at the apiaries (Hillbrow Allotments, Willian Arboretum and Novotel Hotel). The meetings are open to members and the general public alike who may have interests in bees.

They also run a very popular bee awareness session for those who might like to take up beekeeping (16 October) or who have a general interest in our native bees (honey, bumble and solitary bees). In March they run beginner training courses for those taking up beekeeping, during the rest of the year the link up with Welwyn and St Albans Beekeepers for more specialist training courses.

During the summer they also serve a public service of collecting and removing honey bee swarms from properties. They also give guidance to people who may be lucky enough to have bumblebees nest in their gardens, on rare occasions they may move the nest due to safety reasons.

The group recruit and train new beekeepers, educate the public to the importance of honey bees and other pollinators.

(As outlined in 2.2, Appendix 2)

#### **8.1.2 Letchworth Festival Steering Committee**

The Letchworth Festival Steering Committee is requesting £5,057 towards the cost of organising the 'Proms in Park' event at the 2017 and 2018 Festivals.

The costs include; Stage, lighting, sound, cables, power, engineer, St John Ambulance, chairs and crowd barrier hire.

(NHDC funding will not be used to cover the cost of any licencing requirements).

The aim of the Letchworth Festival is to encourage all parts of the community to take part in the annual Letchworth Festival. The Steering Committee organise some events, coordinate all of the Festival activities, and produce publicity.

The Letchworth Festival Steering Committee is planning to hold 'Proms in the Park' event in Howard Park on Sunday 25 June 2017 and on a June date in 2018.

(As outlined in 2.3, Appendix 3)

#### **8.1.3 Small Acts of Kindness CIC**

The Committee is asked to consider a Grant Award of £600 to Small Acts of Kindness CIC. Small Acts of Kindness is an unregistered charity, consisting of 50 volunteers, which has been operating since 2014. The group is seeking £2,100 in total from North

Herts District Council and will be making representation at all 5 Area Committees during November /December 2016.

Funding is being sought to assist with costs of sourcing and distributing 200 Warm in Winter Gift bags to older people living in North Herts. Each Warm in Winter Gift bags contain a large fleecy blanket, thermal socks, hat and gloves, a mug and a selection of hot drinks.

North Herts CVS, North Herts Community Transport and Hertfordshire Independent Living Services have all made requests for gift bags for their clients living in Letchworth, Hitchin, Baldock, Royston, and the villages of Knebworth, Whitwell and Ashwell. (As outlined in 2.4 Appendix 4)

#### 8.1.4 Jackie's Drop In

Jackie's Drop-In (JDI) has 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 Volunteers have also put in many hours in decorating and have used funds raised from their crowd funding campaign when necessary to pay for specialists to undertake electrical installations, plumbing, carpentry etc.

There have been some delays on the project and although it was thought that the building would be operational by October 2016 the date for opening is now early January 2017.

The business plan has been sent out to stakeholders as well as Members of the Area Committee for consultation.

The Committee is requested to consider the release of grant funding of £5,000 originally allocated in March 2016 to this project. The conditions of the grant have now been met albeit after the deadline of the 30<sup>th</sup> September. (As outlined in 2.5 Appendix 5)

## 8.2 **Community Update**

### 8.2.1 Comparison of Letchworth organisations providing services for people with learning, physical and mental health disabilities.

Grant applications have been received over the past few years from organisations that are looking to provide services for those living with learning disability, physical disability and mental health issues.

Communities Officers have undertaken the task to draw up a list of the organisations in the town who provide these services, to outline exactly what activities are being offered and to whom.

By examining the findings it should be clearer to identify any areas where activities or services might be being duplicated. If duplication is in evidence it may be useful for groups to be encouraged to work together in order to make best use of limited resources in terms of funding.

The issue with undertaking this task is that we are looking at three different kinds of disability and each of these may require different activities and services. Outlined below are some of the issues to assist in explaining the difference between the different needs of each group.

**A) Learning disabilities**

- Autism spectrum disorder.
- Cerebral palsy.
- Down's syndrome.
- Epilepsy.
- Rett syndrome.

**B) Mental Health Issues**

- Alcohol/Substance Abuse.
- Alcohol/Substance Dependence.
- Anxiety Disorders.
- Adult Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD/ADD)
- Bipolar Disorder: Overview, Symptoms. Major Depressive Episode. Hypomanic Episode. Manic Episode.
- Depression.
- Eating Disorders.
- Generalized Anxiety Disorder

**C) Physical Disabilities**

- Sight / Hearing Impairment
- Mobility Issues
- Cerebral Palsy.
- Spina Bifida.
- Poliomyelitis.
- Stroke.
- Head Injury.
- Spinal Cord Injury

Some people may live with more than one issue; they may have both learning and a physical disability for instance many disabilities can also lead to mental health problems such as depression. Therefore the wider range of groups available locally that provide services for a diverse range of needs the better.

Outlined in **Appendix 6** is a list of the local groups who have been funded at some stage from Area Committee funds with a list of the issues they provide services for and, what activities they provide and when they provide them.

There may be some cross over and some people who fall into several of the above categories may attend all of the organisations at some point. For instance if you are aged over 60, have had a stroke which has caused partial blindness and issues with mobility, this in turn has led to depression. You may attend Howard Garden Centre for older people, Mind In Mid-Herts group, Wednesday Drop in, Jackie's Drop-In, Yvonne Savage Club for Partially Sighted.

By having a diverse range of groups available provide the end users with a wide choice which allows them to choose social activities that best suit their needs.

The Communities Officer continues to encourage organisations with similar goals and aspirations to work in partnership with each other where possible and to engage in joint projects particularly when applying for external funding pots.

### **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 and should ensure that appropriate liability insurance cover is in place. 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 North Herts Bee Keepers Association – Grant Report
- 15.3 Appendix 3 Letchworth Festival Steering Committee – Grant Report
- 15.4 Appendix 4 Small Acts of Kindness - Grant Report
- 15.5 Appendix 5 Jackie's Drop-In - Grant Report
- 15.6 Appendix 6 List of Letchworth Groups providing services for physical or learning disabled and those with mental health issues.

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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