

TITLE OF REPORT: CHAMPION NEWS & FINANCE REPORT

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Committee of the activities and schemes with which the Community Development Officer has been involved.
- 1.2 To bring to the Committee's attention some important community based activities that will be taking place during the next few months.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 To advise the Committee on the current expenditure and balances of the Area Committee delegated budgets.

2. FORWARD PLAN

- 2.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key decision and has not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

3. PROJECT/ACTIVITY/SCHEME DETAILS**3.1 Young People**

Members met with a group of 11 young people from the Burns Road area on the evening of November 3rd in the Community Centre in Burns Road. Those present also included the CDO, Steve Gibbs from NHDC Community Safety, and Maggie & Sue from the charity Youth at Risk, as well as the six urban Members of this Committee. The majority of young people present contributed to the discussion, which was initiated by the young people around the issues of drug and alcohol consumption, and activities for young people.

The purpose of the meeting was to listen to the concerns of the young people, and to investigate further what could be done to alleviate those concerns by providing a range of activities appropriate to young people. The CDO has been in touch with several organisations since the meeting, and they have all been very helpful, but there is much work still to be done, notably in seeking resources to fund such activities.

It is envisaged that a further meeting will take place with the young people in January or February. The CDO will keep Members aware of progress.

3.2 Other work

3.2.1 Parish Challenge

Twenty-five applications were received for the three grant funding streams. These were logged into the database as they were received, and by the end of the deadline day that process was complete. Members will recall that the Council Offices were inundated over the course of that weekend, and the applications did become somewhat moist. However, the applications had already been logged onto the database and whilst some applications were water damaged, all are still legible, and the incident should have no impact on the course of the assessment process.

3.2.2 Members' Surgery

The most recent surgery held was that held on October 1st, where there were enquiries from 5 members of the public about specific topics. These included items on street cleansing in Queens Road, about the provision of disabled parking spaces in Fish Hill Square, one about a Planning issue already resolved by the Chairman, and one about the permanence of the Coombelands development access road. There was a further enquiry about planning matters from a shop owner in Angel Pavement.

3.2.3 The CDO initiated a legal search for documentation on the Town Drain in Stamford Avenue.

3.2.4 The CDO has adapted the existing Worklog database to make it more user-friendly for other CDOs attending Member Surgeries, as per a suggestion at the recent Area Chairs' Meeting.

3.2.5 The CDO assisted with progress of works in Gas Path / Sewage Works Lane off Gower Road: it is understood that those works are now complete.

3.2.6 Updated NHDC website with information from various village halls. This is done every six months or so and helps to ensure the data is still relevant.

3.2.7 Received a letter of thanks from the Town Clerk to the Committee for their support for Royston in Bloom.

3.2.8 CDO received a letter of thanks from Cathy Curtis, the former Extended Schools Coordination Officer at Meridian School. Members will recall that they awarded a grant of £1,000 to the successor organisation Royston Community Hub CIC. The letter also included a detailed report on the progress of the organisation, and sought any comments. Accordingly the report has been made available to members via email, and any comments Members might make will be referred back to Cathy.

4. FUNDING DECISIONS TO BE MADE / CONSIDERED

4.1 A spreadsheet showing the detailed spend to date of the Area Committee Development budget is enclosed as Appendix A. Following Members' comments, this spreadsheet has been re-formatted to combine the "Development" and "Small Area Grant" budgets.

4.2 A grant application has been received from Corvus Cornix Basketball Club for new basketball initiative, and is attached as Appendix B.

4.3 A grant application has been received from North East Herts School Sport Partnership for Rugby, Multiskills and Sportshall Projects, and is attached as Appendix C.

- 4.4 Members may wish to consider re-allocation of the balance of £1,856 originally allocated to Royston Town Council for works at the Town Hall – they will recall that the Town Council has since received a substantial tranche of Section 106 funding for those works.
- 4.5 Members will recall that at their Meeting on 26th February 2011 they considered an application from Barkway Parish Council for funding support for a speed gun to assist in speed monitoring in the village. Cllr Davidson undertook to make further enquiries about the detail of the investigation. Members may wish to consider whether they still wish to make an award.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Terms of Reference in relation to Area Committees confirm that they may establish and maintain relationships with outside bodies/voluntary organisations which includes discretionary grant aid/financial support. However, this does not include grants for district wide activities.
- 5.2 Section 2 Local Government Act 2000 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.
- 5.3 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.
- 5.4 The Committee has delegated powers to administer funds from the budgets described.

6. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Members are asked to note the information detailed in Appendix A of the report, which relates to the Area Committee budget balances for the current financial year 20011/12.
- 6.2 The spreadsheet also details the pre-allocations carried forward from the previous financial year 2009/10 to the current financial year 2011/12.
- 6.3 In addition, the spreadsheet includes the balances relating to allocated Visioning Budgets available within the Royston & District area.

7. HUMAN RESOURCE AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The local MoUs are managed by the Community Development Officer as part of the regular work programme.
- 7.2 The great majority of the voluntary and community projects that are funded by the Council have equality and social inclusion as a key objective of their purpose. Such projects work very closely with and for the more disadvantaged and potentially socially excluded within our communities.
- 7.3 All activities undertaken by the Council, its committees, Community Development officers or agencies working on its behalf are to be conducted in accordance with the NHDC Corporate Equality Strategy and relevant Equalities legislation.

8. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS

- 8.1 Consultation with Members has occurred in connection with the allocation of funds for Community Projects.
- 8.2 Consultation with the respective officers and external agencies / groups has taken place with regard to the funding proposals for Area Committee Discretionary Development Funds.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 That the Committee endorses the actions taken by the Community Development Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being.
- 9.2 That the Committee considers making a grant award of £800 to Corvus Cornix Basketball Club for a new basketball initiative.
- 9.3 That the Committee considers making a grant award of £992 to North East Herts School Sport Partnership for Rugby, Multiskills and Sportshall Projects.

10. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 10.1 To ensure that the Committee are kept informed of the work of the Community Development Officer.
- 10.2 This report is intended simply 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.
- 10.3 The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims and Strategic Priorities of the Council.
- 10.4 The allocation of funds will improve the services provided by local organisations and groups that are available and accessed by members of the community.

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Appendix A – Finance spreadsheet.
- 11.2 Appendix B – Grant Form, Corvus Cornix Basketball Club.
- 11.3 Appendix C - Grant Form, North East Herts School Sport Partnership

12. CONTACT OFFICER

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