

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**Members' Surgery**

The most recent Surgery, held on December 3rd, attracted eight members of the public with nine discrete topics. These included the provision of more bike parking spaces (two independent requests) and two Highways issues. One was the report of a sunk soakaway and the other a request for a disability ramp in Days Close. Another report was of a blocked drain in Fish Hill. Two anonymous visitors sought enhanced cleaning of planters and around plants outside Morrisons and the Health Centre, and another complained of grease on new paving in Jepps Lane. One visitor objected to the parking of a delivery lorry on a regular basis in Melbourn Street close to the cave.

The requests for additional bike parking were discussed with Town Cllr Harrison, for possible discussion at the next appropriate Town Council Meeting.

The comments about the sunken soakaway at Briary Lane/Lankester Road, and the blocked drain have been passed on to Herts. Highways. Whilst sympathetic to the request, no further action is proposed regarding the request for a disability ramp in Days Close, as this has already been declined by Highways on the grounds that there is inadequate space to install a ramp which would meet the agreed standards. NHDC Planning and Environmental Health have the matter of grease in Jepps Lane in hand.

Other work

The CDO has been updating the NHDC website with information to assist the public with organising events in 2012.

The CDO was able to facilitate repairs to lighting on the path around the Parish Church.

The CD Manager and the CDO met with the Chairman of the Royston BMX Club and are looking forward to drawing up a lease agreement to enable the club to better control the track and its future development, and also to draw down additional funding.

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 As there is no corporate budget to be provided for events to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and Olympics in 2012, all funding requests are being made by organisations to, and considered for discretionary award, by the relevant area committee. It is anticipated that demand may exceed applications, so the Committee may prefer to finalise their decision on funding across a range of projects in the next meeting cycle of this committee to ensure that it is not only those who applied earliest who receive funding.
- 4.3 A grant application has been received from Community Hub CIC for promotional support for 2012 activities , and is attached as Appendix B.
- 4.4 A grant application has been received from Young People of the Year for financial support , and is attached as Appendix C.
- 4.5 A grant application has been received from Royston Museum for financial support for exhibition , and is attached as Appendix D.
- 4.6 A grant application has been received from Angels Support Group for funding to support a creche , and is attached as Appendix E. (At the time of writing the application has not been received, and this item is therefore to follow.)

4.7 Memoranda of Understanding

- 4.7.1 Currently this Committee funds four MoUs:

Organisation	Amount	Start date
Royston Cave	£940	26.11.08
Royston Community Transport	£2,740	26.11.08
Royston Town Twinning	£220	20.04.09
Royston Volunteer Bureau	£3,430	20.04.09

- 4.7.2 Members will note that MoUs run for three years, and that those of the first two organisations are due for renewal.
- 4.7.3 Members are asked to consider future commitments under the MoU process and to note that any further award of MoU grants will remain subject to a 7.1% annual reduction each year of the 3 year term of the understandings; Members may wish to explore and discuss options to reduce or remove some grants in favour of others, provided the overall 7.1% saving from the Area Committee's MoU budget can be achieved.

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 2010/11.
- 6.2 The spreadsheet also details the pre-allocations carried forward from the previous financial year 2009/10 to the current financial year 2010/11.
- 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 £1,000 to Community Hub CIC for promotional support for 2012 activities.
- 9.3 That the Committee considers making a grant award of £1,000 to Young People of the Year for financial support.
- 9.4 That the Committee considers making a grant award of £467 to Royston Museum for financial support for exhibition.
- 9.5 That the Committee considers making a grant award of £270 to the Angels Support Group for financial support of a creche.

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, Community Hub CIC
- 11.3 Appendix C - Grant Form, Young People of the Year
- 11.4 Appendix D - Grant Form, Royston Museum
- 11.5 Appendix E - Grant Form, Angels Support Group

12. CONTACT OFFICER

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