

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**

This year's cycle of Citizenship classes has begun, with one class having already taken place at Tannery Drift School on February 9th. As usual, notes from these classes will be collated at the end of the cycle and brought back to this Committee.

3.2 Other work**Rural Grants Fund**

The CDO assisted with the production of the Minutes of this year's round of the Rural Grants Fund and will provide further assistance in processing awards relating to the three separate funding programmes.

Update on Royston Civic Centre Site Development Brief

Work is progressing towards producing a draft Development Brief for the Civic Centre site. Further meetings have been held with the landowners, trying to establish broad principles for both how the landowners might be able to work together and the types and layouts of different options for development which should be explored further in drafting the development brief. One factor which has been the subject of much consideration is the recent health consultation which included as an option the possibility of extending the health centre. If pursued, that option could have implications for the scope of any development of the wider civic centre area.

Further work is required, including additional discussions with the landowners, before it will be possible to produce a draft brief. These discussions will be taking place over the next couple of months.

3.3 Coombes Community Centre

CDO attended a meeting of the Management Committee of the Community Centre.

3.4 Members' Surgery

The CDO attended the Royston Members' Surgery in Angel Pavement on February 4th. Two issues were raised. The first was that of litter blowing around the A505 and becoming trapped under hedges.

The other was about difficulties in accessing community housing and the existence of barriers which force young people into private housing. This is not specifically an NHDC matter and this person was recommended to contact her Member of Parliament.

3.5 Database and Section 106 Monies

The CDO has undertaken work to streamline the paperwork processes for the consideration and allocation of 106 monies to projects. The report provided for Members at their last Meeting was reported in the press and stimulated several enquiries about project funding. These have been dealt with, and one has been added to the listing provided to this Meeting as Appendix G.

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. This shows that £2,012 remains to be allocated.

4.2 Members may also wish to consider re-allocation of the balance of £1,798, other monies not drawn down or otherwise allocated. This comprises £1,856 originally allocated to Royston Town Council for works at the Town Hall – Members will recall that the Town Council has since received a substantial tranche of Section 106 funding for those and related works; £342 for printing costs not invoiced, and £50 each for a tactile map and for the North Herts. Village of the Year competition, which will not take place this year.

4.3 A grant application has been received from Kelshall Parish Meeting for Queen's Golden Jubilee celebrations, and is attached as Appendix B.

4.4 A grant application has been received from Electralites Majorettes for financial support, and is attached as Appendix C.

4.5 A grant application has been received from The House Youth Drop-In Centre for financial support, and is attached as Appendix D.

4.6 A grant application has been received from Cruse Bereavement Care (Hertfordshire) for advertising and promotional materials, and is attached as Appendix E.

4.7 A grant application has been received from Ignite for Crack-an-Egg-2012, and is attached as Appendix F.

4.8 Memoranda of Understanding

4.8.1 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 Centre	£3,430	20.04.09

4.8.2 Members will note that MoUs run for three years, and that those of the first two organisations are due for renewal.

4.8.3 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.

4.8.4 The recipients of the MoU funds have been contacted and invited to attend this Meeting. Royston Volunteer Centre and Royston Community Transport have both indicated that they wish their funding to continue, and have provided information on their activities over the last three years in the form of annual reports. The CDO has summarised these and they are attached as Appendices H & I. The CDO has been in discussion with the Clerk to Royston Parish Council, who indicated that she also wished the funding to continue, to support environmental monitoring of the Cave.

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 2011/12.

6.2 The spreadsheet also details the pre-allocations carried forward from the previous financial year 2010/11 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 £200 to Kelshall Parish Meeting for Queen's Golden Jubilee celebrations.
- 9.3 That the Committee considers making a grant award of £1,250 to Electralites Majorettes for financial support.
- 9.4 That the Committee considers making a grant award of £1,250 to The House Youth Drop-In Centre for financial support.
- 9.5 That the Committee considers making a grant award of £200 to Cruse Bereavement Care (Hertfordshire) for advertising and promotional materials.
- 9.6 That the Committee considers making a grant award of £332 to Ignite for Crack-an-Egg-2012.
- 9.7 That the Committee considers which, if any, of the existing Memoranda of Understanding it wishes to continue to support;
- 9.8 That the Committee consider re-allocation of any outstanding funds.

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, Kelshall Parish Meeting
- 11.3 Appendix C - Grant Form, Electralites Majorettes
- 11.4 Appendix D - Grant Form, The House Youth Drop-In Centre
- 11.5 Appendix E - Grant Form, Cruse Bereavement Care (Hertfordshire)
- 11.6 Appendix F - Grant Form, Ignite
- 11.7 Appendix G – List of Potential Community Projects
- 11.8 Appendix H – Support note, MoU, Royston Volunteer Bureau
- 11.9 Appendix I – Support note, MoU, Royston Community Transport

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