

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 will recall they awarded the Community Hub CIC a grant at their last Meeting in July. The CDO was informed in early August that the CIC was not able to attract additional funding, so the Community Hub will be closing down at the end of September.

Members' Surgery

- 3.1 A Surgery was held on September 8th in Angel Pavement. There were 14 enquiries. These included:

Inability of Town Council to influence S106 allocations.
Number of accidents in Priory Lane, attributed to 'boy racers'.
Definition of 'affordable housing' out of kilter with reality.
Unfair bidding & impenetrable system for Council housing.
Parking bays 'loading' therefore can't be used for 'unloading'
Wishes to see 'loading bays' returned to general public short-term parking use.
Four potholes Parthia Close between Nos.10 & 12.
Public footpath Thurnall Ave/Towne Road/Cartwright Rd uneven.
Excessive traffic speed in evening northwards in Kneesworth Street in evenings.
Potholes in Victoria Avenue and Morton Street.
Queens Rd speed bump has 'trench'-like pothole in front of it (adjacent Mill Road junction).
Queens Road, need to clear water channels beside speed bumps to prevent ponding, which can result in pedestrians getting splashed.

Disgraceful state of High Street, should start again with all street furniture.

McDonalds planning application should be refused as there is no foul water sewerage on site.

At the time of writing one of the 14 enquiries has been actioned. The CDO will provide a verbal update to the Meeting.

3.2 Other work

The CDO has done some work on a small database to record surgery issues across the District and to report back to Members on progress. The Members' Surgery paragraph above is a sample of its output.

The CDO attended the unveiling of the Priory Memorial Gardens flagpole, facilitated by a grant from this Committee.

The CDO received a letter of thanks from the Town Clerk of Royston for the grant towards Museum Sunday opening costs.

The CDO has commented on Planning Applications at the request of the Area Planning Officer.

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 Members may wish to consider re-allocation of the balance of £1,756 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. This figure of £1,756 is the sum of the £847 and £909 in the first and third rows of the Development Budgets section of the spreadsheet.
- 4.3 The grant of £50 to Royston Rotary Club will not be drawn down, and Members may wish to re-allocate this sum also.
- 4.4 Members should also be aware that the grant awarded to the Community Hub CIC at their last Meeting will not be drawn down as the CIC was not able to attract enough funding overall to continue in operation, as noted above. The money was not transferred to the CIC, and the spreadsheet therefore shows a zero in that row.
- 4.5 A grant application has been received from Royston Town Council for purchase of Museum display equipment and is attached as Appendix B.
- 4.6 A grant application has been received from Royston BMX Racing Club for Support for solicitors' fees and is attached as Appendix C.
- 4.7 A grant application has been received from Friends of Greneway School for young carers' activities including cooking and gardening, and is attached as Appendix D.
- 4.8 An additional application has been received from the Royston 2012 Committee. This cannot be dealt with by this Committee in an appropriate time-frame due to quorum and conflict-of-interest issues. The Chairman and Vice Chairman of this Committee are aware of the situation, and alternative solutions are being examined, possibly such as the grant being signed off, when appropriate, by the Chief Executive.

- 4.9 A copy of the List of Potential Projects is appended as Appendix E. A copy of the list of Monies available under S106 and UU Agreements has recently been circulated to Members.

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 2012/13.
- 6.2 The spreadsheet also details the pre-allocations carried forward from the previous financial year 2011/12 to the current financial year 2012/13.

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 ratifying a grant award of £130 to Royston Town Council for purchase of Museum display equipment.
- 9.3 That the Committee considers making a grant award of £1,000 to Royston BMX Racing Club for Support for solicitors' fees.
- 9.4 That the Committee considers ratifying a grant award of £499 to Friends of Greneway School for young carers' activities including cooking & gardening.

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, Royston Town Council
- 11.3 Appendix C - Grant Form, Royston BMX Racing Club
- 11.4 Appendix D - Grant Form, Friends of Greneway School
- 11.5 Appendix E – List of Potential Community Projects

12. CONTACT OFFICER

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