

TITLE OF REPORT : CHAMPION NEWS AND FINANCE REPORT**REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES****1. SUMMARY**

- 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. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Committee endorses the actions taken by the Community Development Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being.
- 2.2 The Committee is asked to note the budgetary expenditure, balances and carry forwards within the Area Committee Development Budget Spreadsheet attached as Appendix 1 (To follow).
- 2.3 That the Committee considers making a grant award of £1,000 to Royston Arts Festival for support funding.
- 2.4 That the Committee considers making a grant award of £430 to Ignite for financial support.
- 2.5 That the Committee considers making a grant award of £1,000 toward the Royston Underpass project, subject to funding from other sources being forthcoming.
- 2.6 That the Committee considers making a grant award of £1200 towards disability access provision for the 10th Royston Scouts' hut.
- 2.7 That the Committee considers making a grant award of £497 to the Friends of Therfield School for the provision of a sensory garden and wildlife habitat.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To ensure that the Committee are kept informed of the work of the Community Development 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 procedure.
- 3.3 The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims and Priorities of the Council.
- 3.4 Production of this report is a requirement of the 'Priorities for the District' in which the Community Development Officer is required to produce a formal report to the Area Committee 6 occasions per annum in line with the Civic Calendar.

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 EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS

- 5.1 Consultation with 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 the funding proposals for Area Committee Discretionary Development Funds.

6. FORWARD PLAN

- 6.1 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 2013/14 (to follow)
- 7.2 The spreadsheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial year 2012/13 including balances and past expenditure relating to the allocated and un-allocated budgets available to the Committee.
- 7.3 The current level of unallocated funds within the Committee's Development Budget is to be confirmed (see Appendix A).

- 7.4 The current level of unallocated funds within the Committee's MoU Budget is to be confirmed (see Appendix A).
- 7.5 The current level of unallocated funds within the Committee's Ward Member Budgets is to be confirmed (see Appendix A).
- 7.6 This report has been produced to keep Members informed of the work of the Community Development Officer for Royston.

8. PROJECT/ACTIVITY/SCHEME DETAILS

8.1 BMX track

Work has proceeded according to schedule and at the time of writing is almost complete. This work is to remodel the track layout so it conforms with national BMX standards, and has been carried with funding from Sport England, Section 106 monies and the Local Strategic Partnership.

8.2 Anti-social behaviour

There have been several reports of anti-social behaviour in the Burns Road area. The CDO and ASB Officer have liaised with those affected and have sought to provide remedies.

8.3 Citizenship classes

- 8.3.1 This year's round of classes was completed in March with 8 schools visited, all attended by at least two councillors, usually from Town, District and County. Some were also attended by the Town Council's Markets Manager, Steve. The classes took place between January 23rd and March 19th 2013, and addressed around 170 children.
- 8.3.2 The classes took the usual format, with the CDO leading with a description of the 'onion' model of government in England, followed by descriptions by the various councillors of their roles as members at the various levels of government.
- 8.3.3 There then followed a question and answer session, in which the children were encouraged to make comments about Royston as a whole and their likes and dislikes about it. Some classes were a little fazed by the whole process (Studlands Rise, where some of the children were very young indeed), whilst others addressed complex issues with aplomb (Meridian).
- 8.3.4 The comments are routinely collated, and a summary of the issues raised is attached as Appendix F, in order of the frequency with which they were raised. All the issues which were raised three or more times have been included.

8.4 Royston Youth Network

This informal group continues to meet to share information and best practice: the most recent meeting was held on April 18th, and was attended by the CDO, Cllr. Hill, RTClr. Davidson, the NHDC Play Development Officer and Play Work Apprentice, the HCC Youth Development Worker and the School Family Worker from Roysia School.

Amongst the issues discussed was the issue of 'sexting'. Whilst events have been held to draw the attention of parents to the hazards of giving children unsupervised access to the internet via the home computer, workers are aware that attenders to such events are those most active in controlling their children and least in need of more advice. The rise of the smart phone however gives children easy, uncontrolled internet access. There seems little imminent likelihood of a practical remedy to this issue.

8.5 Other work

The CDO assisted with the removal of a redundant carpet from Hitchin Town Hall to the Royston Council Offices.

A request has been received from Therfield Village Hall for Section 106 funding towards the provision of public address equipment in the hall. There are funds available under the relevant category, and the proposal has been added to the list of S106 Projects, which is attached as Appendix H.

The CDO has assisted with various event applications to ensure the correct paperwork is provided to enable the events to take place.

The CDO and Community Development Manager met with Royston Community Association Management Committee to discuss possible enhancements to the Community Centre.

The Royston Underpass is still proving a little difficult to define in terms of responsibility. As noted elsewhere in this report, the "snagging" period has not yet expired, which is hindering the progress of the art project. It is not clear whether this is also what is hindering the allocation of responsibility for street cleansing. The CDO will give a verbal update at the meeting.

8.6 Highways Matters

It is proposed that a section entitled ' Highways Matters ' is included within the Area Champion's News Report for each Committee cycle, to facilitate debate and enable appropriate feedback on any of the proposed or listed schemes. This is to ensure that communication remains effective following the demise of the previous Joint Member Panel for each district.

Any new proposals will be forwarded to the respective Herts County Councillor for consideration who will in turn report back and advise the Committee accordingly.

8.7 GRANT FUNDING DECISIONS TO BE MADE / CONSIDERED

8.7.1 A spreadsheet showing the detailed spend to date of the Area Committee Development budget is enclosed as Appendix A.

8.7.2 A grant application has been received from Royston Arts Festival for support funding , and is attached as Appendix B.

8.7.3 A grant application has been received from Ignite for financial support , and is attached as Appendix C.

8.7.4 A funding application has been received from the CDO towards the Royston Underpass project, and is attached as Appendix D.

- 8.7.5 A grant application has been received from the 10th Royston Scouts towards disabled access to the Scout Hut, and is attached as Appendix E. (Consideration of this application was deferred in February pending receipt of quotations.)
- 8.7.6 A grant application has been received from the Friends of Therfield School towards the provision of a sensory garden and wildlife habitat, which is attached as Appendix F.

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 includes discretionary grant aid/financial support. However, this does not include grants for district wide activities.
- 9.2 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.
- 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.
- 9.4 The Committee has delegated powers to administer funds from the budgets described.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 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 2013/14 (to follow).
- 10.2 The spreadsheet also details the pre-allocations carried forward from the previous financial year 2012/13 to the current financial year 2013/14.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no risk entries that have been recorded on Covalent, the Council's Performance & Risk system. Individual events should have their own risk assessments in place to mitigate any health and safety issues. 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 1st October 2010, a major piece of legislation. The Act also created a new Public Sector Equality Duty, which came into force on the 5th 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 its functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to 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 Development 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 A – Finance spreadsheet.
- 15.2 Appendix B - Grant Form, Royston Arts Festival
- 15.3 Appendix C - Grant Form, Ignite
- 15.4 Appendix D – Funding application, Royston Underpass project.
- 15.5 Appendix E - Grant form, 10th Royston Scouts.
- 15.6 Appendix F - Grant form, Friends of Therfield School.
- 15.7 Appendix G - Summary of Citizenship classes 2013.
- 15.8 Appendix H – Section 106 funding report

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17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

17.1 Review of Policies and Procedures for Financial Assistance to Voluntary and Community Organisations, November 2002.

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