

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 The Committee is asked to note the activities and schemes with which the Community Development Officer has been involved.
- 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 A.
- 2.3 That the Committee endorses the actions taken by the Community Development Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being.
- 2.4 That the Committee considers making a grant award of £800 to Young Enterprise for 'Learning by Doing'.
- 2.5 That the Committee considers making a grant award to Royston & District Volunteer Centre for supporting unemployed people through volunteering.
- 2.6 That the Committee considers making a grant award to Rotary Club of Royston for Royston Technology Tournament.

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 on six 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.
- 7.2 The spreadsheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial year 2013/14 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 £20,787.
- 7.4 The current level of unallocated funds within the Committee's MoU Budget is £0.
- 7.5 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 Royston Town Council and Section 106/UU Payments

Town Councillors Robert Smith & John Davison met with Cllrs Hill, Davidson and Hunter and the Town Clerk to discuss issues around the awarding of Section 106 contributions to organisations in general, and the Town Hall toilets in particular.

At that meeting those present sought an explanation for the failure of the application to fund works to the Town Hall toilets. In like manner, at their last Meeting, Members of this Committee sought to clarify the issue. Members' concerns were passed on following their last meeting, and the Planning Control and Conservation Manager subsequently wrote to the Town Clerk. She has provided a full report to the Committee elsewhere in this meeting.

A forthcoming meeting, scheduled to take place before this meeting, will provide an opportunity for Members to clarify any outstanding issues.

8.2 Royston Railway Underpass

The Royston Railway Underpass has been adopted by NHDC: there had been considerable confusion as to its status; as a County Council Officer had not informed her colleagues that this was the case, and any query to County had met with a denial. It is anticipated that this will resolve many of the issues around cleaning and the installation of dog-bins at the underpass.

8.3 Titchmarsh Close/Farriers Court

The results of the consultation regarding parking issues have been received. These recommend that no action be taken regarding Titchmarsh Close, but that works proceed to impose a 10am - 11am and 4pm - 5pm restriction in Farriers Court. These conclusions are based on four responses from 22 residents, of whom only three supported any action in Titchmarsh Close. The full consultation report is attached as Appendix F.

Members will be aware that there is a long history of difficulties with parking around Titchmarsh Close, and may wish to consider how to proceed.

8.4 Other work

The CDO has been involved with work preparatory to the delivery of a grant funding stream as a successor to the Council's PACIF scheme: this has involved a significant amount of collation of existing data to define eligibility for the forthcoming programme.

- 8.5 The Community Development Grant-giving process is currently being audited, especially regarding its terms of reference and assessment criteria.

- 8.6 A number of grant applications under this year's Rural Grants Fund programmes have been submitted over the past few weeks and initially processed on the Grants Database in lieu of the formal closing date Friday 28th September 2013.

A recent reminder of the deadline has been circulated to the Parishes, offering assistance/advice in completing any of the grant forms and additional paperwork.

8.7 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.

8.8 GRANT FUNDING DECISIONS TO BE MADE/CONSIDERED

8.8.1 A spreadsheet showing the detailed spend to date of the Area Committee budgets is enclosed as Appendix A.

Members should note that this indicates both the Committee's base budget (£18,660) and any monies allocated in previous years which will not be spent, as well as the carry-forwards from the 2012-13 financial year, which together total £9,214.

This latter sum is also at the Committee's disposal and allocation of such funds should be considered before any allocations are made from this year's unallocated base budget.

8.8.2 A grant application has been received from Young Enterprise for 'Learning by doing', and is attached as Appendix B.

8.8.3 A grant application has been received from the Royston & District Volunteer Centre for supporting unemployed people through volunteering, and is attached as Appendix C.

8.8.4 A grant application has been received from the Rotary Club of Royston for the Royston Technology Tournament, and is attached as Appendix D.

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 of the 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 of the 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 1 of the report, which relates to the Area Committee budget balances for the current financial year 2012/13.

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

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, Young Enterprise
- 15.3 Appendix C - Grant Form, Royston & District Volunteer Centre
- 15.4 Appendix D - Grant Form, Rotary Club of Royston
- 15.5 Appendix E – Potential Community Projects 2013-2014
- 15.6 Appendix F – Titchmarsh Close Parking Consultation Results

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17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

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