

TITLE OF REPORT: COMMUNITY UPDATE AND GRANT APPLICATIONS**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 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 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 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 Spread sheet attached as Appendix 1.
- 2.3 That the Committee considers a funding award of £500 to Royston & District Museum & Art Gallery to assist with costs associated with running fortnightly mothers and toddlers dance classes at the museum. Full details of the funding application are detailed in 8.1 of this report and Appendix 3.
- 2.4 That the Committee considers awarding support funding in relation to any potential Highways schemes as proposed and discussed under section 9.7 of this report.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To ensure that the Committee are kept informed of the work of the Community 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 policy.

- 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 Officer is required to produce a formal report to the Area Committee 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 Spread sheet, which relates to the Area Committee budget balances for the current financial year 2014/15
- 7.2 The spread sheet 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 **£17,457**
- 7.4 This report has been produced to keep Members informed of the work of the Community Officer for the Royston & District Area.

8. GRANT REQUESTS

- 8.1 **Royston & District Museum & Art Gallery**
Grant funding of £500 is requested to contribute towards the total cost of £1,125 to assist with costs associated with providing fortnightly mothers and toddlers dance

classes at the museum. Funding would be used to cover publicity costs and also costs for bringing in a qualified dance teacher to run the sessions.

- 8.2 Members are asked to note the funding applications currently being considered but not yet subject to area committee decision as detailed in the table below.

| Project |
|---|
| Funding support to Royston Town Council to assist with a Community Art Project at Coombes Hole. |
| Funding support & advice to Royston Means Business re next Summer's Event being planned. Grant funding application for £1,000 to come before the Area Committee in March 2015 to contribute towards the total cost of £2,300 which includes publicity costs, road closure costs, insurance and entertainment costs. |
| Funding support to Friends of Roysia School to assist with the purchase of external play equipment |
| Funding support to the Free after 3pm Parking Initiative Scheme in Royston. |

9. PROJECT/ACTIVITY/SCHEME DETAILS

9.1 Royston BMX Track

The Community Officer (CO) continues to work with Royston BMX group to secure funding for a new pavilion at the BMX track. The pavilion will be used for the storage of equipment as well as a providing an office for use on event days.

The next stage in the process will be a public consultation exercise with residents on the 27th November to present the new designs for the pavilion with the view of trying to address any local resident concerns.

In addition an officer site meeting has been arranged to meet with Jez Cox, the Hertfordshire Year of Cycling Manager to see if the project can be integrated into the programme in any way, and especially as we are given to understand that there may be funding available, or signposting to other funding, to assist too.

A verbal update on the meeting will be given to Members by the Royston CO at the December meeting.

9.2 Fitness Trail at York Way

The Fitness Trail was installed during October and is being well used by the local children. It was also suggested that a set of football goals might be installed at the same site, but it is the recommendation of the CO that an alternative location is perhaps sought for the goals in order to avoid over congestion of equipment at York Way.

The park area has had problems previously with dog mess and colleagues in Enforcement have visited the site and recommended that a dog bin is installed at the bottom of the path near to the new Fitness Trail; this will be subject to agreement with the grounds team, responsible for the relevant emptying and maintenance contract, see 9.5 below..

9.3 **Road Naming in Royston**

The Royston Town Council have submitted the formal application for the naming of a new road in Royston. The road linking Market Hill and Fish Hill is to be named Market Link. The Street Naming and Numbering Officer will install the signage once agreement has been received from Hertfordshire Highways.

9.4 **Salt Bins in Royston**

At the request of Royston Area Committee Members and following resident requests at a Councillor Surgery earlier in the year, the CO has acquired 2 salt bins to be located at Hunters Way and at a yet to be confirmed location along Beldam Avenue, off the Barkway Road.

9.5 **Dog Bins in Royston**

The CO is liaising with colleagues in Grounds Maintenance regarding the installation of dog bins at York Way Park and Eliot Road. The Royston & District Area Committee has previously allocated £180 for the provision of additional dog bins, however the cost of the installation, maintenance and emptying of each bin in the first year now equates out to £400 per unit. Members are asked to note there are no additional charges after the first year as such costs could be absorbed into the Authority's overall contract.

9.6 **Finger Post Maintenance in Royston**

The Royston Town Council enquired which agency had the responsibility for the maintenance of finger posts (brown directional 'flags' pointing to places of interest/particular note) in the Town Centre. It was determined that North Herts District Council was in fact responsible and the CO identified appropriate funding within the North Herts District Council's Town Centre Maintenance budget in order to address rectification works..

Marshals have been contracted to undertake the works which will be carried out during the early months of 2015.

9.7 **Highways Matters**

This section is included within the community update report for each committee cycle to facilitate debate and enable appropriate feedback on any of the proposed or listed Highways related schemes.

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

9.8 **Councillors Surgery**

Feedback on matters raised at the Member Surgery Saturday 6th September 2014 at Angel Pavement

- Several issues were raised by residents regarding road works around the town, which were impeding pedestrian access. Councillor Hill was aware of these issues and passed them on to Herts Highways.
- A complaint was received regarding litter on Baldock Road, with considerable litter seemingly from McDonalds. The Royston CO spoke with McDonalds who confirmed that regular litter picking is carried out by their staff. The CO has observed the clean up and if the problem resurfaces again he will liaise with the company.
- An issue was raised regarding a poorly maintained footpath at the end of Green Drift which links up with Ivy Farm. The footpath is in a bad state of repair and is also poorly

lit. Local residents believe that the path has not yet been formally adopted and is still under the ownership of the original developers, Moody Homes. The CO has spoken with Herts Highways and North Herts District Council and can confirm that the land has not yet been adopted. The Royston CO will continue to investigate this issue and try to formulate some possible options to plicate local concerns. Members should be aware that any proposal to seek adoption can take some time, and such timescales are not only driven by officer availability in the relevant services at NHDC, but also the relevant developers' appetite to transfer, use independent legal advice, etc.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The Terms of Reference in relation to Area Committees confirm that they may establish and maintain relationships with outside bodies/voluntary organisations which include discretionary grant support. However, this does not include grants for district wide activities.
- 10.2 Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 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.
- 10.3 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.
- 10.4 The Committee has delegated powers to administer funds from the budgets described.

11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 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 2014/15.
- 11.2 The spread sheet also details the pre-allocations carried forward from the previous financial year 2013/14 to the current financial year 2014/15.
- 11.3 In the past few years there has been no inflationary allowance to the Area Committee Budgets and the 2014/15 baseline budget has stayed the same as the previous year.

12. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 There are no risk entries that have been recorded on Covalent, the Council's Performance & Risk system. Individual events should have there own risk assessments in place to mitigate any health and safety issues.

13. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 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.
- 13.2 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.
- 13.3 The projects which comprise the Community 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.

14. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 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.

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1 There are no pertinent Human Resource implications associated with any items within this report.

16. APPENDICES

- 16.1 Appendix 1 – Area Committee Development Budget Spread sheet 2014/15.
- 16.2 Appendix 2 – Area Committee Grant Form – Royston & District Museum & Art Gallery

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18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

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