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| *PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT | AGENDA ITEM No. |
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TITLE OF REPORT: GRANT APPLICATIONS AND COMMUNITY UPDATE

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 Spreadsheet attached as Appendix 1.
- 2.3 The Committee is asked to consider a Grant Award of £200 to Corvus Cornix Basketball Club to assist with the costs for running basketball training sessions and matches at Royston Leisure Centre. Sessions will last 4 hours and will be running at the centre on Sundays during October, November 2016 and February and March in 2017
- 2.4 The Committee is asked to consider a Grant Award of £300 to Therfield Village Preschool Committee to assist with costs for the drafting of feasibility drawings for a new premises for pre-school and community sports in the village.
- 2.5 The Committee is asked to consider a Grant Award of £1,000 to Creative Royston to assist with publicity and distribution costs of the festival programme for the 2016 festival which is to be held again during September.
- 2.6 The Committee is asked to consider a Grant Award of £1,500 (maximum that can be recommended) for Royston & District Volunteer Centre who is requesting £3,750 to

assist with room hire costs, staffing costs and running costs for the facility during 2016/17.

- 2.8 The Committee is asked to consider a Grant Award of £1,000 to the Rotary Club of Royston to assist with room hire costs, equipment costs, transport costs and first aid costs at their three annual events, namely the Royston Kite Festival (Sept 2016), the Technology Tournament (Feb 2017) and the Youth Makes Music event (March 2017).
- 2.9 The Committee is asked to consider a Grant Award of £250 to Royston Town Twinning to assist with travel and venue hire for the twinning visit to Germany in October.
- 2.10 The Committee is asked to consider a Grant Award of £1,500 (maximum that can be recommended) to Royston & District Community Transport which is requesting £5,000 to assist with the set up costs of the new Dial-a-ride scheme and the running costs of Royston & District Community Transport including staffing costs, office costs, administration costs and vehicle running costs.
- 2.11 The Committee is asked to consider a Grant Award of £1,500 (maximum that can be recommended) to the Citizens Advice North Herts who is requesting £2,270 from Royston & District Area Committee to assist with new office accommodation costs in Letchworth. The Citizens Advice North Herts are seeking £20,000 funding in total from all five North Herts Area Committees, already securing an award of £8,415 from Letchworth Area Committee.

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.

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. ISSUES

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 2016/17.

7.2 The spreadsheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial year 2015/16 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: - **£10,700.**
The Committee also has **£3,018** funding available in pre-allocated funds brought forward from the 2015/16 financial year.

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 **Corvus Cornix Basketball**

Grant funding of £200 to Corvus Cornix Basketball Club to contribute towards the total cost of £600 for a series of basketball sessions. Funding will assist with the costs for running basketball training sessions and matches at Royston Leisure Centre. Sessions will last 4 hours and will be running at the centre on Sundays during October, November 2016 and February and March in 2017.

8.2 **Therfield Village Preschool**

Grant funding of £300 is requested to contribute towards the total cost of £500 to assist with costs for the drafting of feasibility drawings for a new premises for pre-school and community sports within the village.

8.3 **Creative Royston**

Grant funding of £1,000 is requested to contribute towards the total cost of the event of £17,535 to assist Creative Royston with publicity and distribution costs of the programme for the 2016 festival which will be held again during September.

8.4 **Royston & District Volunteer Centre**

Grant funding of £3,750 is requested to assist Royston & District Volunteer Centre with room hire costs, staffing costs and running costs for the facility during 2016/17. Members are reminded that whilst the organisation is seeking £3,750, the maximum award which can be recommended under the current Area Committee Grants process is £1,500.

This group was in receipt of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the 4 year period between 2011/12 to 2015/16. This funding application mirrors the terms of the MoU and as it is for staffing costs, this can only be funded for one year under the current Area Committee Grants process which states "*staffing costs, not for more than one year, or for short term projects.*" As for all former MoU recipients, and indeed a number of former grant recipients, NHDC officers will enter into dialogue regarding how groups can become more sustainable, with increasingly less Council finance available, in coming years.

8.5 Rotary Club of Royston

Grant funding of £1,000 is requested to contribute towards the total cost of £4,250 to assist Rotary Club of Royston with room hire costs, equipment costs, transport costs and first aid costs at their three annual events, namely the Royston Kite Festival (Sept 2016), the Technology Tournament (Feb 2017) and the Youth Makes Music event (March 2017).

8.6 Royston Town Twinning

Grant funding of £250 is requested to contribute towards the total cost of £1,600 to assist Royston Town Twinning with travel and venue hire for a twinning visit to Germany in October this year.

8.7 Royston & District Community Transport

Grant funding of £5,000 is requested to assist Royston & District Community Transport with the set up costs of the new Dial-a-ride scheme and the running costs of Royston & District Community Transport including staffing costs, office costs, administration costs and vehicle running costs. Members are reminded that whilst the organisation is seeking £5,000, maximum award which can be recommended under the current Area Committee Grants process is £1,500.

This group was in receipt of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the 4 year period between 2011/12 to 2015/16. This funding application mirrors the terms of the MoU and as it is for staffing costs, this can only be funded for one year under the current Area Committee Grants process which states “*staffing costs, not for more than one year, or for short term projects.*” As for all former MoU recipients, and indeed a number of former grant recipients, NHDC officers will enter into dialogue regarding how groups can become more sustainable, with increasingly less Council finance available, in coming years.

8.8 Citizens Advice North Herts

Citizens Advice North Hertfordshire (CANH) is an independent local charity providing a free, confidential information and advice service. It provides the advice people need for the problems they face, and improve the policies and practices that affect people’s lives. It relies heavily on volunteers and is equipped to respond to any issue, covering many areas including benefits, debt, employment and housing amongst many others. Advice is delivered face-to-face from 12 outlets, including housing offices, community centres, county courts, food banks, as well as via telephone, email and access to reliable online information.

CANH is seeking a contribution to the fit out of a new head office in Letchworth following a move to new premises. The relocation is required as they more space and a secure long-term home. The current Letchworth office has a tiny waiting room, not enough interview rooms, no training room and nowhere near enough desk space for staff and volunteers.

The current rent is £18,000 per year and the premises landlord is looking to raise it to £25,000. CANH current 3 year lease ends in June 2016. The new premises in 49 Station Road is owned by the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation and offers much better value for money with approximately twice the floor area for £19,800 per year on a 15 year lease.

The new premises will enable an increase from 3 to 5 interview rooms to see more face-to-face clients, double the Advice line phone capacity, and train more volunteers. More efficient hot-desking is planned in order to maximise use of office space. Demand

from clients has risen by 30% over the past two years, and volunteer numbers have risen over 10% over the past 6 months. CANH aims to double the number of advice calls handled to 2,000 per year, dramatically increase the amount of financial capability training offered to reduce debt issues, and expand the provision of energy advice to relieve fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency. The new facility will enable the service to continue its core work to support the most vulnerable people across North Hertfordshire with benefits, debt, housing, and employment and family issues.

The new premises contains the last remaining original Parker and Unwin shop front in Letchworth, and the Heritage Foundation has agreed to pay for an external refurbishment and internal strip out of the building, to include new heritage windows and restoration of the original shop front. CANH will need to finance the creation of four new interview rooms, flooring, lighting, power and data, additional desks, chairs and telephones, security alarm, an accessible toilet, as well as upgrades to kitchen, toilets, heating and ventilation systems.

CANH is seeking grant funding of £20,000 from North Hertfordshire District Council towards the cost of the fixtures and fittings for the new premises.

The current Letchworth head office is open for drop-in five mornings a week and appointments in the afternoons. The new premises will have a much bigger waiting room, 5 interview rooms instead of 3 and a dedicated training and Advice Line room as well as more office space generally. This will make it possible to recruit more volunteers, see more clients, answer more calls, and offer more preventative work such as financial capability training to reduce debt issues, and energy advice to reduce fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency. It will also assist the organisation by providing a secure foundation on which the service can build to diversify the funding for the future.

Members should be aware that, North Hertfordshire District Council currently provides CANH with an annual Memorandum of Understanding of £145,430 towards the annual running costs, in addition a further £25,000 annually towards the cost of a court worker. There are also in-kind contributions in terms of rate relief of approximately £20,000 on three premises in Letchworth, Hitchin and Royston. Also rent subsidies, in-kind contribution of maintenance on the NHDC premises at Thomas Bellamy House in Hitchin and Royston Town Hall Annex, as outlined below:

Level of Subsidised Rents

Thomas Bellamy House & Royston Town Hall Annex £6,000 per site

Service Charges (In Kind)

Thomas Bellamy House £4,482 & Royston Town Hall Annex £8,804

Comparison with other Hertfordshire authorities has demonstrated a continuing desire by the majority of authorities to maintain adequate funding for CAB advice services, albeit the amounts vary considerably from authority to authority. The population statistics also give a very approximate indication of potential level of demand for the services provided, but much will depend on levels of deprivation, priority areas for the individual authority i.e. homelessness, levels of debt etc.

For 2014/15, figures were

| District / Borough | Population | Funding provided to CAB | Other info |
|--------------------|------------|-------------------------|---|
| North Herts | 131,000 | £145,430 | plus (as stated above) |
| Broxbourne | 95,700 | £144,000 | plus £39k for specialist (housing) court worker |

| | | | |
|-----------------|---------|----------|-----------------|
| Stevenage | 86,000 | £170,000 | |
| East Herts | 143,000 | £129,000 | (13/14 figures) |
| Hertsmere | 102,400 | £215,000 | |
| Dacorum | 149,700 | £172,000 | |
| Welwyn Hatfield | 116,000 | £80,750 | |
| Watford | 95,500 | £243,692 | |
| Three Rivers | 90,400 | £297,340 | |

The above table may be of assistance to Members in order to set the local figures into a County wide context. In discussions between senior officers the CANH board of trustees, the CANH were reluctant to consider any arrangement with NHDC to use a floor of the Council Offices for their operations as they preferred to maintain a visible 'independence' from the council for their clients (albeit such arrangements exist at authorities such as St Albans). Consequently this course of action would not have proved practical, as the timescale for the completion of the newly refurbished Council Offices would be too late for the relocation of the CANH due to the lease at their current premises ceasing prior to this date.

- 8.9 Members are asked to note the funding applications currently in the pipeline but not yet ready for funding consideration as detailed in the table below.

| Project |
|---|
| Funding support to assist with costs for putting on a Royston Hill Climb Cycle Event in 2016. |
| Funding support to assist with costs for putting on the Barkway 10k run in 2016. |
| Funding support to Barkway Parish Council to assist with extension and kitchen refurbishment works at Barkway Village Hall; the authority is setting up a new capital funding scheme for community facilities which may be available for such purpose.. |
| Funding support to Royston Town Youth FC to assist with equipment costs and publicity costs for a new youth team for 4-6 year olds. |
| Funding support to Nuthampstead Shooting Ground to assist with a project to establish training & coaching classroom facility at the venue. |
| Funding support to assist the Friends of Therfield 1 st School in the creation of an external covered communal area re hosting village / community events and extra curricular activities. |
| Funding support to assist Reed 1 st School in the development of a village library / community learning hub facility. |

9. PROJECT/ACTIVITY/SCHEME DETAILS

9.1 Royston Town Centre Working Party

The Royston CO continues to work with County, District and Town Councillors and partner organisations on the Royston Town Centre Working Party. So far in 2016, the group has instigated and carried out a successful town tidy up on 5th March as part of the 'Clean for the Queen' initiative.

The Royston CO attended this successful event along with 20 other volunteers. 30 bags of litter were collected during the 3 hour exercise. Royston First is also involved

in this project and has carried out a steam clean of the High Street in February. This will be followed up by 2 further steam cleans in the summer and just before Christmas.

9.2 **Land at the end of Green Drift**

The Royston CO continues to liaise with colleagues at Hertfordshire Highways regarding the unadopted land at the end of Green Drift. The Royston CO will be carrying out a consultation exercise with the residents of Green Drift and Ivy Lane during the second quarter of 2016 to gauge opinion on making the pathway at the location a designated right of way.

To achieve this it would be necessary to remove the gated entrances at both ends of the current pathway and update the footpath and install lighting. The Royston CO will discuss this with Moody Homes to determine whether they are willing to pay for the required works prior to the land being adopted by Highways.

If Moody Homes are willing to finance the required works, the land would be passed to Hertfordshire County Council for adoption and future maintenance.

9.3 **Royston Festival**

The Royston CO continues to liaise with and provide advice to the Royston Festival Committee and attends meetings as appropriate. The 2016 Royston Festival will see a change in format compared with previous years with the festival being held over a single weekend rather than 2 weeks.

The Royston CO is assisting the group with the arrangements for their festival procession as part of the event. This will include liaising with Police and Highways on the TTRO and the traffic management solution.

9.4 **Ad Hoc Summer Soul Event**

The Royston CO has been working closely with the organisers of the Ad Hoc Summer Soul event which will be held in Royston for the 4th time on Saturday 9th July. The Royston CO has assisted the group with the required paperwork for the North Herts Safety Advisory Group and has advised on the TTRO and traffic management.

The Royston CO will also be in attendance on the day of the event to ensure that it runs smoothly. The group have made a number of amendments to the event plan for this year's event based on the concerns raised previously. This includes amendments to the TTRO and Traffic management which have been approved by the Police and Highways, increased security and toilet facilities at the event and tighter controls on alcohol. All attendees at the event will now be issued with colour coded wrist bands.

9.5 **Barkway Parish Council**

The Royston CO is supporting the Barkway Parish Council with their planning for extension and kitchen works at Barkway Village Hall. The project is projected to cost in the region of £50k and the Royston CO is investigating possible funding routes to generate in the region of £20k for the building works.

As detailed in point 8.9 above, the authority is setting up a new capital funding scheme for community facilities which may be available for such projects as Barkway Village Hall.

Barkway Parish Council are awaiting Planning permission for the project and have made enquiries with local builders regarding the proposed works but with proposed builders currently busy on projects, the Parish Council have decided to delay the project until 2017.

9.6 **Therfield Pre-School**

Therfield Pre-school is currently run from the Village Hall but the facility has limitations in terms of spacing both for the children and with parking.

The Royston CO is working with representatives from Therfield Pre-School, Therfield Sports & Cricket Club and Royston Cricket Club to try and develop a community hub type facility for all parties within the village, possibly on the Police Row recreation ground potentially utilising land & services currently supplying the existing pavilion.

The group have recently received consent from the Royston Conservators, who own the land on which the current recreation building is built, for the demolition and creation of a new building on the site, subject of course to necessary planning or similar permissions..

The Royston CO will assist the group in looking for funding for the project.

9.7 **Nuthampstead Shooting Club**

The Royston CO and CM have met with representatives from Nuthampstead Shooting Club Facility and the national co-ordinator for the sport from Sport England, who are seeking support for the development of training & coaching classroom facility at the venue. Nuthampstead Shooting Club is a key regional training facility for the sport and is used by the Great Britain Shooting Team.

The Royston CO spoke with colleagues at Herts County Council to ascertain whether a mobile unit or mobile classroom was available for purchase but no such resource was available.

The Royston CO forwarded a number of potential units currently available for purchase on E-Bay but has not had any further correspondence from the group on the matter.

9.8 **Royston Rockets BMX**

The Royston CO had been liaising with Royston Rockets on a proposed sprint training strip at the venue which would be used for sprint training and bike skills training. Given the potential costs of this project (£10k) the club decided not to pursue the matter. The group are instead using the playground facilities at Roysia School for this project which is more cost effective in the short term.

9.9 **Royston Councillor Surgery**

Detailed in Appendix 2 of this report are the issues that have been raised at recent Councillor Surgeries along with the outcomes.

9.10 **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.

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 aid/financial support but excluding grants for district-wide activities.

The Committee has delegated powers, as a body, to allocate discretionary budgets and devolved budgets within the terms determined by the Council.

- 10.2 Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides a General Power of Competence which gives local authorities the power to do anything that individuals generally may do. This may be for, or otherwise than for the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident in its area.
- 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 **as a body** has delegated powers to administer funds from the budgets described. Whilst individual ward members may comment on and support (or not) any grant application put before the committee, the decision to award is afforded only to the Southern Rural Area Committee itself under the Council's Constitution and provided such committee is quorate at the time of such decision.

11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 From the 2016/17 financial year, a proposal was made through the council's corporate business planning process to reduce the overall amount the council awards by way of grants, both area committee and district wide, by a suggested 20%. Following workshops, there was a request that whilst the principle of saving approximately £86k of revenue was supported, the current level of district MoUs should be retained, thus the area committee element was reduced by a greater amount.
- 11.2 Members should note that funding available in the Area Committee Base Budget for 2016/17 and carry forward from the 2015/16 financial year is not able to fund all the grants tabled at the meeting in their entirety. Members should also note that the funding available is for the whole financial year which covers four Committee meetings.
- 11.2 Appendix 1 provides details of the 2016/17 budget position for the Area Committee.

12. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 There are no relevant 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.

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 Spreadsheet 2015/16.

16.2 Appendix 2 – Councillor Surgery Updates

16.3 Appendix 3 – Area Committee Grant Form – Corvus Cornix Basketball

16.4 Appendix 4 – Area Committee Grant Form – Therfield Village Pre-school

16.5 Appendix 5 – Area Committee Grant Form – Creative Royston

16.6 Appendix 6 – Area Committee Grant Form – Royston & District Volunteer Centre

16.7 Appendix 7 – Area Committee Grant Form – Rotary Club of Royston

16.8 Appendix 8 – Area Committee Grant Form – Royston Town Twinning

16.9 Appendix 9 – Area Committee Grant Form – Royston & District Community Transport

16.10 Appendix 10 – Area Committee Grant Form – Citizens Advice North Herts

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18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

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