

*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT	AGENDA ITEM No. <h1 style="text-align: center;">7</h1>
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TITLE: CHAMPION NEWS AND FINANCE REPORT

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY, PARTNERSHIPS & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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 advise the Committee of the current expenditure and balances of the Area Committee’s delegated funds.

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

3.1 Rural Grants Fund (RGF) incorporating Parish Challenge, Playground Challenge, Parish Enhancement & Cleansing Fund(PE&CF) & Parish Amenity Capital Improvement Fund (PACIF) 2009/10

- 3.1.1 The award decisions from the 2009/10 round of the Rural Grants Fund were announced at the end of February 2010 and a total of over £110,000 was awarded to support rural community projects.

The new fund supported grants under the following funding headings: ‘Community Building Refurbishment Fund’ (formerly known as Parish Challenge), ‘Playgrounds’ (formerly Parish Playgrounds) & ‘Environmental Improvements Fund’ (formerly Parish Enhancement & Cleansing Fund). The Parish Amenity Capital Improvement Fund remained under the same heading. All applications had to support the rural elements of the Council’s priorities of ‘Sustainable Developments’ & ‘Green Issues’.

The publicity of these awards was maximised through the media, the Spring edition of Outlook and members were informed in MIS.

The 2010/11 round of the RGF will be formally launched in early May 2010 and as is custom and practice, full application packs will be available to be downloaded from the Council's website. The lead officer for the fund is the SR CDO and his contact details are at the end of the report.

The lead officer for all PACIF applications is the Council's Community Facilities Manager Peter Underwood and his email is: peter.underwood@north-herts.gov.uk or direct dial 07789 033212.

3.2 2010 Village of the Year Competition

3.2.1 The 2010 Hertfordshire Village of the Year Competition to include the Village of the Year North Competition sponsored by the Council has now been formally launched by the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) Hertfordshire. The timetable for the 2010 competition is:

1 st February:	Entry packages sent out
Thursday 22 nd April:	Poster Competition deadline
Monday 26 th April:	Poster Competition judging
Monday 10 th May:	Preliminary Assessment Meeting
7 th -18 th June:	Judging visits
Friday 18 th June @ 2.00pm:	Final decisions meeting
Thursday 1 st July:	Awards Evening at County Hall
Saturday 24 th July:	Presentation Ceremonies in winning villages

3.2.2 It was also agreed that Councillor David Miller will continue as a judge but it is hoped that the 2010/2011 Chairman of the Council Councillor David Levett will officially present the Village of the Year North awards to the winning village and the main category award winners.

3.2.3 Hertfordshire Community Foundation have formally agreed to provide the primary sponsorship of £2,000 for the next three years from 2010 to ensure the mid term sustainability of the competition which will now be known as 'The Hertfordshire Village of the Year Competition'.

The 2010 costs of £500 for sponsoring the Village of the Year North Competition for the second year funding will be:

- £300 – Southern Rural Area Committee
- £150 – Baldock Area Committee split 50/50 of £75 from Arbury Ward and £75 from Weston & Sandon Ward (to be confirmed)
- £50 – Royston Area Committee

At the time of writing the report, the above costs were agreed in 2008/09 by Southern Rural and Royston Area Committees, but confirmation of funding is awaited by the respective Ward Members for Arbury and Weston and Sandon, as they had initially only agreed funding for Year 1.

The costs are proportioned relative to the rural population figures for each respective area committee.

3.3 Scooter Transport Solutions Scheme (SCooTS)

3.3.1 SCooTS continues to go from strength to strength with excellent partnership support and is now running at full capacity. Currently all thirty scooters are on loan, with two of these being electric models. There is also currently a waiting list of young people between the ages of 16 and 25 years of age who are either on college or work placements.

The Southern Rural Area Committee funding of £15,000 Capital Visioning funding and £15,000 Revenue funding through a Three Year 'Memorandum of Understanding' (MoU) has proved invaluable in ensuring the continued success and sustainability of SCooTS.

Total numbers of enquiries and those from North Herts:

- 297 total enquiries out of 400
- Total number of clients on scheme from inception of SCooTS = 59 out of 83 total clients
- Current status of the scheme (e.g, running at full capacity) 30 clients, of which 17 are North Herts clients

The following statistics table updates the committee with the number of North Hertfordshire enquiries and clients to date:

Location	Number of enquiries	Number of clients	Comments
Ashwell	7	1	
Baldock	7	1	Travelling to Pirton
Barkway	3	0	
Barley	2	1	
Bendish	0	0	
Breachwood Green	11	4	
Codicote	5	0	
Great Ashby	7	3	
Graveley	1	1	
Hexton	5	4	
Hitchin	22	1	Travelling to Shillington
Holwell	2	0	
Ickleford	6	1	
Kimpton	21	12	
Kings Walden	2	2	
Knebworth	6	2	
Langley	1	0	
Letchworth	25	1	Travelling to Shuttleworth College. Steering Group approved
Lilley	3	0	
Little Wymondley	2	0	
Gt Wymondley	0	0	

Offley	0	0	
Peters Green	0	0	
Pirton	7	0	
Pottersheath	1	0	
Royston	4	1	Connexions client
Sandon	6	4	
St Ippolyts	13	9	
St Pauls Walden	1	0	
Therfield	5	5	
Wallington	2	1	
Weston	18	5	
Whitwell	1	0	
Totals	196	59	

3.4 Highways Work Programme

- 3.4.1 The Highways Work Programme for Southern Rural is attached as Appendix 2.
- 3.4.2 Members are still requested to propose schemes and projects for inclusion in the 2010/11 JMP Discretionary Budget Programme and for this to be included in the report to the next JMP on 26th April 2010.
- 3.4.3 Over the past year or so Officers have been working with the 'Knebworth Parking Improvement Group (KPIG)' to discuss a range of parking issues affecting the village.
- 3.4.4 One of the outcomes of the KPIG was a request to introduce short stay parking into NHDC's St Martins Road car park to remove long stay parking and support short stay, shoppers parking. Several traders attended a KPIG meeting and the consensus was that a short stay car park would benefit the village.
- 3.4.5 At its meeting of 4th February 2010, Council recently approved capital funding for 2010/11 to fund the introduction of Pay and Display machines for short stay parking in St Martins Road Car Park. Work is progressing to deliver this project.
- 3.4.6 In order to progress the work Southern Rural Area Committee's support is sought for the proposed tariffs for the car park plus related changes to adjacent on street parking restrictions.
- 3.4.7 The following parking tariffs are proposed for St Martins Road:

Monday to Saturday, 08.00 to 18.00

Up to 1 hour 50p

Up to 2 hours £1.00

Up to 3 hours £1.50

Maximum stay 3 hours

- 3.4.8 To support the short stay use of the car park it is proposed to amend the on street parking restrictions in London Road as follows:

Existing

London Road – Monday to Friday, 07.00 to 19.00, 1 hour No Return within 1 hour
Station Road – Monday to Friday, 07.00 to 19.00, 1 hour No Return within 1 hour

Proposed (subject to formal Traffic Regulation Order procedure)

London Road – Monday to Saturday, 08.00 to 18.00, 30 mins No Return within 1 hour
Station Road – Monday to Saturday, 08.00 to 18.00, 1 hour No Return within 1 hour

The above changes plus introduction of Pay and Display car park will be accompanied by an increased Enforcement presence in the village to assist the correct use of and effective turnover of spaces.

3.5 Area Committee Work Programme

- 3.5.1 The proposed Area Committee Work Programme is attached as Appendix 3, for members to comment.

This was initially discussed at a meeting in February 2009 with the Area Committee Chairman & Vice Chairman by the Head of Community Development & Cultural Services as an opportunity for Members to develop an initial three year work-programme for 2009/2010 – 2011/2012.

The programme can detail updates regarding on-going projects and also provide a project by project update at future Committee meetings.

4. FINANCE REPORT

4.1 SUMMARY

- 4.1.1 A separate full report for funding consideration for support in the provision of additional diversionary anti fly-tipping and CCTV Covert Camera equipment from the Committee's Capital Plant & Equipment Visioning and Development Revenue budgets will be presented to Members at the Committee meeting.
- 4.1.2 In order to ensure that the equipment being proposed is 'fit for purpose', a full and detailed assessment of all appropriate CCTV Covert Camera equipment available on the market has been undertaken by the Council's Enforcement team and the CDO, as well as liaison with neighbouring authorities for case study results.

The equipment purchased must also be fully compatible with the Council's existing camera and IT systems in order to ensure it does not require additional revenue funding from corporate budgets. A small grant from the community safety budget has also allowed the Council to purchase the additional camera connections required to facilitate the use of vehicle mounted cameras in the second enforcement team van, an additional aid to detection, and hopefully prevention.

- 4.1.3 To advise the Committee on the delegated budgets for the financial year 2009/10 and the carry forward pre-allocated balances of delegated budgets from the financial year 2008/09.
- 4.1.4 To bring to the Committee's attention details of recent applications, allocation and commitment of delegated funds for community initiatives and projects.

5. BACKGROUND

- 5.1 Cabinet approved a new three year (2009-12) strategy for financial assistance to voluntary and community organisations at its meeting on 21st October 2008.
- 5.2 The report included the following comments specifically about Area Committee SLAs:

Area Committee Service Level Agreements

In addition to the main, centrally funded SLA, Area Committees have increasingly funded smaller SLA with those local organisations with whom a longer term service relationship has been deemed appropriate and beneficial.

Each Area Committee has been advised of those SLAs that fall within its remit and has been asked to consider which it would wish to continue to support and at what level.

This work will be concluded later this autumn and will include the balance of funding between the Area Committee and the central SLA funds.

- 5.3 A spreadsheet detailing the total spends to date of the Area Development Budgets is attached as Appendix 1.
- 5.4 The Committee has now agreed its programme of awards to community organisations for 2009/10 on a meeting by meeting basis. All Parish Councils & Parish Meetings, Community & Voluntary Groups and Organisations have been advised on this change and invited to apply for grant-aid.
- 5.5 The Committee is asked to note the Area Committee Discretionary Base Budget for 2009/10 is £23,640, but having agreed four Memorandum Of Understandings (MOU) totalling £6,630, the current unallocated budget is £8,491.
- 5.6 The Committee is asked to note that the Member Ward Budget for 2009/10 of £700 per Member should be allocated by March 31st 2010, but will need to be allocated by the meeting of 18th March 2010, as this is the last meeting of the Council's fiscal year.
- 5.7 Where there are multi member wards, it is good practice, and indeed custom and practice, for members to advise their colleagues on any community grant requests. This will avoid any potential application conflicts and ensuring that multiple requests are managed in a coordinated way from the same organisation, and ensuring the organisation demonstrates best value for money.

6. ISSUES – PROPOSALS FOR 2009-12

Strategic Objectives for the Council

- 6.1 All current SLA's & MoU's should be compliant with the North Hertfordshire's district-wide Vision and the Council's Mission and three priorities.
- 6.2 The North Hertfordshire Local Strategic Partnership Sustainable Community Strategy has also identified a number of key priorities for the District to 2021 and it is evident that funding the voluntary and community sector is an efficient and effective way of achieving a number of its ambitions and aspirations. The use of Local Area Agreement reward grant funding via the Local Strategic Partnership to fund voluntary and community projects will also require formal corporate governance, using an SLA.
- 6.3 The Council's Corporate Plan 2005-2015, includes three priorities of work for 2009/10 and beyond, which are:

Town Centres
Green Issues
Sustainable Development

The detail of the activities the council will undertake to deliver these priorities has been incorporated into the new Corporate Business Planning programme for the Council.

- 6.4 The alignment and ownership of actions to be undertaken on the Council's behalf by the voluntary and community sector contributing to these priorities will be included in future SLA. All organisations will be required to demonstrate how they can contribute to the three priorities, but also the district's Sustainable Community Strategy.
- 6.5 As part of the review of both the Major and Minor SLA (centrally funded), consideration will be given to those organisations which clearly have a local rather than a district wide focus to be administered, funded, monitored and evaluated through Area Committees.
- 6.6 The following agreed MoUs awarded by this Committee for 2009-12 are:

Group	SLA 2008/9	MoU 2009/10	Activities to be Funded	Links to Council Priorities/Sustainable Community Strategy
Wyndley Baptist Church	£0	£0	Ad-hoc grant in 2008/9. New SLA for one week holiday club that takes place in summer holidays	Improving the life chances of children and young people
Knebworth Town Twinning	£0	£130	Ad-hoc grant in 2008/9. New SLA to support costs of Town Twinning Visits	Strengthening communities and involving people
SCooTS	£0	£5,000	3 year capital fund expires March 2009. New SLA to provide revenue support to the rural transport	Improving the life chances of children and young people Sustainable Development

			scheme, eg: salaries, equipment, maintenance costs.	Green Issues
Codicote Village Day	£0	£750	Ad-hoc grant in 2008/9. New SLA for an Annual Village Day Event	Strengthening communities and involving people
The Village Voice	£0	£750	To provide revenue support to the rural village newsletter, eg: distribution costs including distributing Outlook & equipment, costs (computer, printer/copier etc').	Strengthening communities and involving people, Sustainable Development & Green Issues
Total costs	£0	£6,630		

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 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.
- 7.1.1 Within the context of the Council's Corporate Business Planning Process, any increased or new SLA/MoU for 2009 and beyond will be funded through the Area Committee Development budget. (The base budget for SLA was transferred out from the Development budget in 2002/3).
- 7.1.2 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.
- 7.1.3 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.
- 7.2 The Committee has delegated powers to administer funds from the budgets described.
- 7.3 There are no other legal implications pertinent to this report.

8. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 In the past few years, given the significant carry forward for Area Committee Development budgets, there has been no inflationary allowance, and the baseline for 2009/10 was the same as 2008/9.

- 8.2 When the Area Committee SLA were originally set up, the expenditure was transferred from the Committee's Development budget and a small separate SLA budget heading was created. As this Committee had no current SLA, no budgets have been transferred.
- 8.3 Any SLA transferring into the remit of the Area Committee will do so within its present budget.
- 8.4 Each MoU will be adjusted for inflation in line with the Council's budget position for each of the three years of the agreement. The 2010/11 MoU payments will automatically include an inflationary uplift.

9. HUMAN RESOURCE AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The local MoUs are managed by the Community Development Officer as part of their regular work programme.
- 9.2 However, a Business Process Review had been commissioned in 2008/09 to review the most effective and efficient way in which SLA and the more general grant awarding arrangements can be improved.
- 9.3 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. There is a strong argument to be made that if the Council did not provide financial support for projects to do the work that they do, then it could, itself, have to meet the needs of such people in other ways.
- 9.4 There are no other Human Resource implications pertinent to this report.
- 9.5 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 legislation.

10. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS

- 10.1 Each organisation having a Service Level Agreement and or Memorandum of Understanding with the Council has an annual review with the Community Development Officer.
- 10.2 There was in-depth consultation with the North Hertfordshire Compact prior to the final report being submitted to Cabinet for its meeting on 21st October 2008.
- 10.3 Members who represent the Council on the management committees/boards of voluntary groups and organisations were consulted and their comments considered within the final report to Cabinet.

- 10.4 Consultation with Members has occurred in connection with the allocation of funds for Community Projects.
- 10.5 Consultation with the respective officers and external agencies/groups has taken place with regard to funding proposals for Area Committee Discretionary Development Funds.

11. ISSUES & FUNDING DECISIONS TO BE MADE

- 11.1 Appendix 1 is a spreadsheet which sets out the detailed spend to date of the Area Development Budget.
- 11.2 Appendix 1.1 is a funding application being submitted to this Committee meeting by Kimpton Parish Council for support costs of £500 to purchase a new projector.
- 11.3 Appendix 1.2 is a request from Cllr. Brindley of £700 from his 2009/10 Ward Member discretionary budget to Codicote Parish Council in support of the new Codicote Sports Pavilion.
- 11.4 The Spring 2010 edition of the Council's Community News magazine 'Outlook' featured an article on the funding support to community groups and organisations to encourage all to apply for grant-aid.
- 11.5 Members have also been promoting their respective 2009/10 discretionary Ward Member budgets of £700 in their local village newsletters.
- 11.6 Members are asked to note the information detailed in Appendix 1 spreadsheet of the report, which relates to the Area Committee budget balances for the current financial year 2009/10. All budgets will need to be allocated by 18th March 2010, as the Committee meeting is the last in the 2009/10 fiscal year where all un-allocated budgets can be allocated, or re-allocated as appropriate.
- 11.7 The spreadsheet also details the pre-allocations carried forward from the previous financial year 2008/09.
- 11.8 In addition, the spreadsheet includes the balances and past expenditure relating to the allocated and un-allocated Area Capital Visioning Budgets available to the Committee.
- 11.9 The total budget for the Committee for 2009/10 is £30,640 including a Ward Members budget of £7,000.
- 11.10 The current unallocated discretionary base budget is £8,491. Should Members be mindful of considering the grant application request of £500 from Kimpton Parish Council, then the remaining unallocated budget would be £7,991.
- 11.11 The current unallocated Members Ward Discretionary Budget (MWDB) is £4,590. Should Members be mindful of considering the request from Cllr. Brindley to allocate his £700 discretionary budget from Codicote Parish Council in support of the new Codicote Pavilion Project, then the remaining unallocated budget at the time of writing the report would be £3,890.

- 11.12 The current Highways Project Budget has an unallocated budget of £700. This has arisen as a result of the £700 overspend having been returned from Hertfordshire County Council.
- 11.13 The current unallocated Capital Visioning Budget is £15,600, but if Members were mindful of supporting the request of this amount for further diversionary anti fly-tipping measures, then the budget would be fully allocated.
- 11.14 The 2009/10 MWDB is £7,000 and all grant applications from this budget should be allocated by 31st March 2010. Members should note though that the last Committee meeting of the 2009/10 Committee cycle and fiscal year to consider allocating all of its' 2009/10 budgets including the MWDB is 18th March 2010.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 12.1 Note that a rebalancing of the funding of SLA is proposed to reflect better the district wide/local area focus.
- 12.2 Confirm that the detailed negotiations with individual projects will be conducted by relevant officers, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement and Rural Affairs (for Major and Minor funded projects) and Area Committee Chairmen and or Vice-Chairmen.
- 12.3 Note the proposed timescale for implementing the new SLA.
- 12.4 The Committee is asked to note the budgetary expenditure, balances and carry forwards from the Ward Development Budgets and Visioning Budgets as set out in Appendix 1.
- 12.5 That the Committee considers proposing any joint funded projects or schemes for inclusion on the 2009/10 JMP Works programme for the SR area as advised from the minutes of the JMP meeting held on the 26th June 2009 and as advised in Point 3.8.2 of the report, be included in the report to the next JMP on 26th April 2010 for consideration in the 2010/11 Highways Works Programme.
- 12.6 That the Committee supports the proposals for the Pay and Display tariff at St Martins Road car park, Knebworth as advised in 3.8.7 of this report and that the Committee's views on proposed on street parking changes in 3.8.8 be reported to the Transport Policy Officer.
- 12.7 The Committee is asked to consider the future commitment of any un-allocated funds within the Committee's Development Budgets prior to the end of the current financial year which ends 31st March 2010. The Committee is reminded that the last of its Area Committee meetings in the 2009/10 Committee cycle and Council fiscal year to allocate all un-allocated funds or to re-allocate funds will be on **18th March 2010**.

- 12.8 The Committee is asked to consider the possible re-allocation of funds from any initiatives/projects that are approaching two years on the original date of commitment and/or where there is likely to be no foreseeable progress in the near future, should this be applicable.
- 12.9 That the Committee endorses the actions taken by the Community Development Officer to promote greater community capacity and well being for rural communities.

13. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 13.1 To ensure that the Committee are kept informed of the work of the Community Development Officer.
- 13.2 To inform Members of the budgetary situation and the current balances of funds available for to the Committee for consideration and allocation.
- 13.3 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.
- 13.4 The allocation of funds will improve the services provided by the local organisations and groups that are available and accessed by various members of the community.
- 13.5 To confirm the future strategic policy direction for the programme of financial assistance for the voluntary and community sector, through the negotiation of SLA.

14. APPENDICES

- 14.1 Appendix 1 – Budget expenditure, balances, and carry forwards from the Ward Development Budgets and the allocated Visioning Budgets.
- 14.2 Appendix 1.1 – Grant request of £500 – Kimpton Parish Council.
- 14.3 Appendix 1.2 – Ward Member discretionary budget request of £700 from Cllr. Brindley for the new Codicote Sports Pavilion.
- 14.4 Appendix 2 – Highways Work Programme.
- 14.5 Appendix 3 – Area Committee Work Plan.

15. CONTACT OFFICERS

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15.2 Lois Stewart (Group Accountant – Customer Services)

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15.4 Simon Young (Transport Policy Officer)

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16. BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

16.2 Report to Cabinet on 21st October 2008 on Service Level Agreements 2006-9 and 2009-12.

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