

*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT	AGENDA ITEM No.
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TITLE: CHAMPION NEWS AND FINANCE REPORT

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY, PARTNERSHIPS & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

**PORTFOLIO HOLDER: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & RURAL AFFAIRS COUNCILLOR
MRS TRICIA COWLEY**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Committee on the current expenditure and balances of the Area Committee delegated budgets.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 To advise the Committee of the activities and schemes with which the Community Development Officer has been involved.
- 1.4 To bring to the Committee's attention some important community based activities that will be taking place during the next few months.

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 2010 Village of the Year Competition

- 3.1.2 The results of the 2010 Village of the Year North Competition (sponsored by the Council) and the Overall Village of the Year Hertfordshire were formally announced at the Official Awards Ceremony held at County Hall on 1st July 2010. Two North Herts villages entered being Ashwell and Knebworth.

- **Village of the Year North: Ashwell**
- **Overall Winner of Village of the Year for Hertfordshire: Ashwell**
- **Business Category: Knebworth**
- **Judges' Special Award - Peterkin Award: Robin Wordsworth from Knebworth (This award is for an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to Village Life).**

Children's Poster Competition

- **Year 0/2: First Prize - Adam Feasey from Breachwood Green JMI**
- **Second Prize - Katie Johnson from Breachwood JMI**
- **Year 5/6: First Prize and overall winning poster - Emily Westcott of Kimpton Primary School**
- **Second Prize - Molly Thomas-Chivers from Kimpton Primary School**
- **Overall Winning School: Mrs Marion Stewart-Smith, Head Teacher from Kimpton Primary School**

3.1.3 Councillor David Levett, 2010/11 Chairman of North Hertfordshire District Council presented the awards to Ashwell at the formal Presentations Ceremony in the winning village on **Saturday 24th July 2010 @ 12.45pm.**

3.2 2010 Parish & Town Councils Conference – Monday 28th June

3.2.1 The 2010 Parish & Town Councils Conference held on Monday 28th June 2010 held at the Main Council Offices was an extremely successful event. The agenda covered the following rural topics:

- Revision of the North Hertfordshire Rural Strategy/Parish Charter 2010 – 2015
- Eastern Plateau Rural Development Programme – funding opportunities
- Planning Issues
- Identifying and conserving our historic environment
- Update on North Hertfordshire Local Strategic Partnership

Four breakout groups also discussed:

- Section 106 and the Community Infrastructure Levy
- Trade waste and recycling
- Rural grants & case studies
- Highways, including road conditions, speed, traffic calming and parking enforcement

3.2.2 A working group of up to seven officers and parish representatives have set up a working group that met to work up the detail for next stages of refreshing the 2005-2010 Rural Strategy to take it through the next five years 2010 - 2014.

3.2.3 The Parish Charter which is a Statement of Partnership between County, District and Parish and Town Councils will also be reviewed at the same time and that it will be an appendix to the Rural Strategy.

3.2.4 The timelines for the next stages of both documents will be

- Overview and Scrutiny Committee (20th July 2010)
- NHDC Cabinet Meeting (27th July 2010)

- Consultation ends (late September 2010)
- Consideration by parishes meeting (October 2010)
- Final sign-off at NHDC Cabinet meeting (7th December 2010)

3.3 Planning Process for Parish Councils - Informal Seminar

3.3.1 As a follow up from the Annual Parish & Town Councils Conference, Councillor Barnard as Chairman and on behalf of the Southern Rural Area Committee arranged an Informal Seminar on the Planning Process for Parish Councils for all Southern Rural Parish Councils and Parish Meetings on Thursday 30th September 2010 at 6.45pm preceding the Committee meeting.

The aim of the informal seminar is to make the Planning Process easier for Parish Councils.

The Council's Planning Control and Conservation Manager attended the seminar to give guidance and answer questions.

Some of the issues covered were:

- What is an admissible planning reason for objections?
- How can a Parish Council tell NHDC their opinion?
- How to interact effectively with your Councillors
- How to contact NHDC Officers
- How does the revised NHDC Constitution change what Parish Councils can do?

For further information the Council's Planning Control and Conservation Manager can be contacted on 01462 474613 or email: mary.caldwell@north-herts.gov.uk

3.4 Revision of Rural Strategy and Parish Charter

3.4.1 Officers have been currently undertaking a full revision of the existing Rural Strategy for North Hertfordshire and the Parish Charter in readiness for discussion at the Parish & Town Councils Conference on 28th June 2010.

The SR CDO as the primary rural officer, has been fully engaged in this process to ensure a full overview is included.

A Working Group including parish representatives have since met to update the strategy ahead of it being presented to Cabinet on 27th July 2010.

3.5 Highways Work Programme

3.5.1 The Highways Work Programme for Southern Rural is attached as Appendix 2.

The programme details updates of on all current schemes.

3.6 Area Committee Work Programme

3.6.1 The proposed Area Committee Work Programme is attached as Appendix 3

The programme details updates of on-going projects and it can itemise any projects proposed for future discussion at Committee.

FINANCE REPORT

4.1 BACKGROUND

4.1 A spreadsheet detailing the total spends to date of the Area Development Budgets is attached as Appendix 1.

4.2 The Committee agreed its programme of awards to community organisations on a meeting by meeting basis. All Parish Councils & Parish Meetings, Community & Voluntary Groups and Organisations have been advised on this process.

4.3 The Committee is asked to note the Area Committee Discretionary Base Budget for 2001/11 is £23,709, but having agreed four Memorandum Of Understandings (MOU) totalling £6,699, the current unallocated budget is £11,831.

4.4 The Committee is asked to note that the Member Ward Budget for 2010/11 of £700 per Member should be allocated by March 31st 2011, but will need to be allocated by the meeting of 24th March 2011, as this is the last meeting of the Council's fiscal year.

4.5 Where there are multi member wards, members are advised to consult with their fellow ward Councillors on any forthcoming community grant requests, to try and avoid any potential application conflicts or multiple requests.

5. ISSUES – PROPOSALS FOR 2009-12

Council priorities

5.1 All current SLA's & MoU's and subsequent grant awards should support the North Hertfordshire's district-wide Vision, the Council's Mission and the three priorities.

Town Centres
Green Issues
Sustainable Development

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 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.

- 6.2 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.
- 6.3 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.
- 6.4 The Committee has delegated powers to administer funds from the budgets described.

7. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 In the past few years, given the significant carry forward for Area Committee Development budgets, there has been no inflationary allowance other than for MoU's, and the baseline for 2010/11 was the same as 2009/10.

8. HUMAN RESOURCE AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The local MoUs are managed by the Community Development Officer as part of their regular work programme.
- 8.2 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.
- 8.3 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.

9. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS

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

10. ISSUES & FUNDING DECISIONS TO BE MADE

- 10.1 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 2010/11. All budgets will need to be allocated by 24th March 2011, as the Committee meeting is the last in the 2010/11 fiscal year where all un-allocated budgets can be allocated, or re-allocated as appropriate.
- 10.2 The spreadsheet also details the pre-allocations carried forward from the previous financial year 2009/10 including the balances and past expenditure relating to the allocated and un-allocated Area Capital Visioning Budgets available to the Committee.
- 10.3 The total budget for the Committee for 2010/11 is £30,709 including a Ward Members budget of £7,000.
- 10.4 The current unallocated discretionary base budget is £11,831.
- 10.5 The current unallocated Members Ward Discretionary Budget (MWDB) is £7,000.
- 10.6 The current unallocated Capital Visioning Budget is £15,600.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 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.
- 11.2 That the Committee endorses the actions taken by the Community Development Officer to promote greater community capacity and well being for rural communities.

12. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 12.1 To ensure that the Committee are kept informed of the work of the Community Development Officer.
- 12.2 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.
- 12.3 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. APPENDICES

- 13.1 Appendix 1 – Budget expenditure, balances, and carry forwards from the Ward Development Budgets and the allocated Visioning Budgets.
- 13.2 Appendix 2 – Highways Work Programme.
- 13.3 Appendix 3 – Area Committee Work Plan.

14. CONTACT OFFICERS

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15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

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