

*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT	AGENDA ITEM No. 6
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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 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 2010/11 Rural Grants Fund

Members are advised that this year the Panel will be meeting during the mid / end of January 2011, and applicants will be advised of the outcome of their grant applications by the mid / end of February 2011.

3.2 Parish Council Support

Community Development Officers are assisting Parish Councils in with potential projects that may be eligible for funds via received Planning section 106 / Unilateral Undertakings payments.

Current SR Parishes currently being supported are, Kimpton, Codicote, Knebworth, Ickleford & St Ippolyts.

3.3 Ward Member Discretionary Budgets

Over the Christmas period Community Development Officers have (on Member advice) initiated a number of Ward Member Discretionary grant awards under £500.

Lilley – Spring Bulb Planting
Codicote Day Centre - Activities
Codicote Neighbourhood Watch – Signage & Re-launch
St. Giles, Codicote – Flower Festival
Kimpton – Play Group equipment
Kimpton – Scouts
Knebworth PC – Village Hall kitchen equipment

3.4 Highways Work Programme

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

The programme details updates of all current schemes.

3.5 Area Committee Work Programme

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.

4. FINANCE REPORT

4.1 BACKGROUND

4..2 A spreadsheet detailing the total spends to date of the Area Development Budgets is attached as Appendix 1.

4..3 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..4 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 £10,831.

4.5 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.

4.6 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 the 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.
- 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 Equalities 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 £10,831.
- 10.5 The current unallocated Members Ward Discretionary Budget (MWDB) is £6,149.
- 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 considers allocating all uncommitted funds within the Committee's budgets before 24th March 2011.
- 11.3 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.
- 15.2 Community Governance Reviews – Full Council Meeting 25th February 2010.

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