

*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT	AGENDA ITEM No. 7
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TITLE: CHAMPION NEWS AND FINANCE REPORT

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY & COMMUNITY SERVICES

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 Summary of the 2010/11 Rural Grant Awards

PARISH AMENITY CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND (PACIF) 2010-11

1. Radwell Social Club	£25,768
2. Offley Village Hall	£26,250
3. Barkway Parish Council	£50,000
4. Weston Village Hall	£50,000
5. Holwell Parish Council	£32,096
6. Codicote Parish Council	£50,000
Total of awards:	£234,114
Total PACIF budget:	£250,000
Balance:	£15,886

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS FUND (EIF) 2010-11

1. Ashwell Parish Council	£1,300
2. Codicote Parish Council	£1,300
3. Graveley Parish Council	£1,300
4. Hinxworth Parish Council	£1,300
5. Ickleford Parish Council	£1,130
6. Knebworth Parish Council	£1,300
7. Offley & Cockernhoe Parish Council	£1,300
8. Pirton Parish Council	£1,300
9. St.Paul's Walden Parish Council	£1,300
10. Weston Parish Council	£500
Total of awards:	£12,030
Total EIF budget:	£16,121
Balance:	£4,091

COMMUNITY BUILDING REFURBISHMENT FUND (CBRF) 2010-11.

1. Ashwell Parish Council	£3,065
2. Breachwood Green Village Hall	£2,650
3. Graveley Parish Council.	£2,387
4. Peter's Green Village Hall	£1,460
5. Pirton Village Hall	£1,350
6. Wallington Village Hall	£3,475
7. Weston Cricket Club	£900
Total of awards:	£15,287
Total CBRF budget:	£20,019
Balance:	£4,732

PLAYGROUNDS FUND (PF) 2010-11.

1. Kimpton Parish Council	£5,590
2. Reed Parish Council	£4,500
Total of awards:	£10,090
Total PF budget:	£10,000
Balance:	-£90

3.1.1 Officers are currently in consultation with Ashwell Parish Council regarding technical issues relating to the Ashwell Cemetery project which is seeking funding via the PACIF grant programme. The member panel to determine this allocation will be convened shortly.

3.1.2 The Rural Grant Funding Budget for this financial year is approximately £41,000. Officers are currently reviewing the grant criteria in preparation for the programme announcement and launch at this year's Town & Parish Councils Conference on 6th July 2011.

3.2 Parish Council Support

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

Current Southern Rural Parish projects seeking s106 funds

Kimpton – Refurbishment of Village Hall Stage Area

Codicote – Street-scene Project

Graveley – Proposed works to Bus Shelter

Wymondley – Projects tbc

Pirton – Projects tbc

St Ippolyts – Projects tbc

Recent projects where section 106 / Unilateral Undertakings payments have been committed / release include:-

Kimpton – Village Hall Floor & Play Area Equipment

Codicote – Fitness Trail Equipment, Tennis Courts All Weather Surfacing, Drainage Works & a Lighting Rig at Peace Memorial Hall

Ickleford – Allotment Project – this proposal will require the scheme developer to allow a chance to ‘allotment’ use rather than ‘community garden’ as was originally intended.

3.3 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 2011/12 is £23,240, but having agreed four Memoranda Of Understandings (MOU) totalling £6,230, the current unallocated budget is £17,010.

- 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 2012.
- 4.6 Where there are multi member wards, members are advise 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 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 2011/12 was the same as 2010/11.

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, including the Equality Duty which came into force on 5th April 2011 and requires the authority to have 'due regard' to the needs of specific groups in its activities.

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 2011/12.
- 10.2 The spreadsheet also details the pre-allocations carried forward from the previous financial year 2010/11 including 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 2011/12 is £30,240 including a Ward Members budget of £7,000.
- 10.4 The current unallocated discretionary base budget is £17,010.
- 10.5 The current unallocated Members Ward Discretionary Budget (MWDB) is £7,000.
- 10.6 The current unallocated Capital Visioning Budget is £800.
- 10.7 Carers in Hertfordshire – Rural Young Carers Activity Programme Funding Request

The Committee will recall the presentation made by Carers in Hertfordshire at the last meeting which made reference to the formal closure of the Young Carers club sessions held every other week in Hitchin.

Following the presentation and discussion, the Committee requested that a formal Grant Application be submitted outlining the proposed programme of initiatives aimed at young carers from rural backgrounds.

Officers have released an initial £500 grant to help sustain the bi-weekly young carers sessions through to September 2011, when it is planned to commence the new programme of activities offering one event per month.

Similar to the young carers club sessions, the proposed programme of activities and outings will not only give the young carers the opportunity to take 'time out' from their caring roles but also help support them in their own development whilst meeting other young people in similar situations.

It is proposed that one activity / outing will be programmed each month catering for approximately 20 young carers. Carers in Hertfordshire will approach the 3 senior schools in Hitchin with the aim of drawing out those young people living in rural areas who have caring responsibilities. Experience and records show that this is likely to equate to 5 young people from each school.

Carers in Hertfordshire are working with the Young Carers and their families in seeking other routes of funding to help support the activities. The estimated cost for a year's programme is £1,500 with the majority of the costs relating to transport and session worker fees with other costs being met by Carers in Hertfordshire.

The Young Carers group are extremely grateful in having received financial support from the Committee to help sustain the club sessions through to the beginning of the new school year and ask the Committee if it would consider further funding of the proposed programme of activities targeting rural young carers.

10.8 St Ippolyts Parish Hall – Sound and Hearing Loop System Funding Request

The Trustees of the Parish Hall are seeking financial support from the Area Committee to help part fund the installation of a sound & hearing loop system at the Hall.

The equipment comprises of a noise pollution limiter and a general amplified sound system with a high quality induction loop. Total costs for the whole system is £5,670 and the group has already secured £2,000 from County Councillor Richard Thake's Discretionary Budget 2010/11 and £816 from Grassroots.

The has also applied to other funding routes and raised funds locally. The group now seeks a grant award from the Area Committee of £500 to reach the overall target.

10.9 Holwell Parish Council – Security Improvements at the Pavilion Funding Request

Approximately 18 months ago the Holwell Parish Council experienced a break in and theft from the Pavilion of all of the grass maintenance equipment and machinery used within the Parish.

As a result the Parish Council installed a new security system to the facility and now seeks additional funding to carry out plywood and metal sheet cladding to reinforce the storage section of the building.

Building Control have advised that the proposed works do not require Building Regs consent.

Three separate quotes for the works have been received ranging from £556 through to £875 excluding VAT and the Parish Council is seeking a grant of £500 to undertake the works.

Through negotiation with the Parish Clerk, Officers from the Community Development Section have stressed that efforts are made to encourage wider community use of the facility as a result of the recent investment and enhancements.

10.10 Rompers Mother & Toddler Group, Knebworth – Activity Equipment Funding Request

Rompers has been based at St Thomas More Church Hall, Knebworth for the past 20 years and operates Monday morning and Wednesday afternoon sessions, providing early learning fun activities for pre playgroup age children and their mothers / fathers.

Sessions are very popular with between 30 and 50 Mothers and toddlers attending each week. Fees from the sessions go to cover Hall Hire Fees, consumable materials for art activities, insurance, specialist sessions such as Mel's Magic & Jo Jingles refreshments and staffing costs. The group's finances are tightly run with very little operating surpluses each year.

Most of the group's major items of equipment are now extremely well worn and desperately need replacing. The group is therefore seeking funds from the Area Committee to help fund a list of equipment:-

Climbing Frame	£759.85
Safety Matting Set	£399.95
Kitchen Corner & Accessories	£299.95
Double Sided Easel	£259.95
Small Folding Trampoline	£54.95
Active Word Starter Set	£78.93
Giant Top	<u>£39.95</u>

Total £1,893.53

Community Development Officers have looked through the accounts for the past 18 months and are working with the coordinator in seeking other sources of funding.

10.11 Anti Fly Tipping Measures Funding

Members will recall that in previous years the Area Committee assigned some funding to a generic budget for Highways & Anti Fly Tipping Measures. Owing to the extensive Joint Funded JMP commitments to Highways projects made over last year, there are now no funds remaining or designated for Anti Fly Tipping Measures.

Members may wish to consider reassigning funds for this purpose from the carry forwards from the 2010/11 budget, under the headings of *Parish & Community Projects Uncommitted £2,044* or *£6,081 in Community Projects*.

In addition there is further *£1,500 under Community Projects* which is payment back to the Area Committee by St Paul's Walden Parish Council as a contribution for the Highways project re the Lay By works in front of the village school.

10.12 Additional Joint Funded Highways Projects for consideration at July's JMP

NHDC Area Committees are being invited during the June 2011 cycle of meetings to consider any additional and final joint funding contributions.

Requests for further new schemes will be considered depending on the complexity to produce a cost estimate and whether Members can indicate a provisional level and amount of joint funding, taking into consideration budgetary factors.

Upon receipt of the proposed additional schemes for matched funding, the Lead Assistant District Manager from Hertfordshire Highways will present costed schemes to the next meeting of the JMP on the 25 July 2011 for a decision on which schemes the panel is able to support.

Members are therefore requested to propose any additional schemes and projects for consideration at July's Joint Member Panel.

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

The programme details commitments to joint fund a number of Highway related projects made by the Area Committee at the meeting held on 23rd March 2011.

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.
- 11.3 That the Committee considers a grant award to Carers in Hertfordshire to assist in part funding the Young Carers Programme of activities targeting rural young people with caring responsibilities as outlined in section 10.7 of this report.
- 11.4 That the Committee considers a grant award to part fund the installation of a Sound and Hearing Loop System at St Ippolyts Parish Hall as outlined in section 10.8 of this report.
- 11.5 That the Committee considers a grant award to the Project to part fund security works to the Pavilion at Holwell as outlined in section 10.9 of this report.
- 11.6 That the Committee considers a grant award to Rompers, the Knebworth based Mother & Toddler Group to part fund new activity equipment as outlined in section 10.10 of this report.
- 11.7 That the Committee considers assigning funds to a heading within the Committee's Budget for the on going management and deterrence of Fly Tipping in rural areas as outlined in section 10.11 of this report.

- 11.8 That the Committee considers the proposal of any additional joint funded Highways schemes / projects within the Southern Rural area to the Joint Member Panel scheduled for 25th July 2011.

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.
- 12.4 The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims and Strategic Priorities of the Council.

13. APPENDICES

- 13.1 Appendix 1 – Budget expenditure, balances, and carry forwards from the Ward Development Budgets and allocated Visioning Budgets.
- 13.2 Appendix 2 – Highways Work Programme.
- 13.3 Appendix 3 – Area Committee Work Programme.
- 13.4 Appendix 4 – Grant Form Rural Young Carers Activity Programme.
- 13.5 Appendix 5 – Grant From St Ippolyts Parish Hall, Sound & Hearing Loop System.
- 13.6 Appendix 6 – Grant Form Holwell Parish Council, Pavilion Security Works.
- 13.7 Appendix 7 – Grant Form Rompers Mother & Toddler Group, Knebworth – Activity Equipment.

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.