

**SOUTHERN RURAL AREA COMMITTEE
THURSDAY 6 JUNE 2013**

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

AGENDA ITEM No.

9

TITLE OF REPORT : CHAMPION NEWS AND FINANCE REPORT

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 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 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.
- 1.4 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 Development 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 That the Committee considers funding the installation of an additional Dog Waste Bin in St Ippolyts as outlined in section 8.1 of this report.
- 2.4 That the Committee considers awarding support funding in relation to any potential Highways schemes as proposed and discussed under section 8.3 of this report.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To ensure that the Committee are kept informed of the work of the Community Development 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 procedure.

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.

3.4 Production of this report is a requirement of the 'Priorities for the District' in which the Community Development Officer is required to produce a formal report to the Area Committee 6 occasions per annum in line with the Civic Calendar.

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. BACKGROUND

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 2013/14. – To Follow.

NB at the time this report was compiled the Area Committee Budgets sheets were undergoing revision to take into account the new Census data relating the changes in population distribution across the District.

7.2 The spreadsheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial year 2012/13 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 **£ tbc**

7.4 The current level of unallocated funds within the Committee's MoU Budget is **£ tbc**

7.5 The current level of unallocated funds within the Committee's Ward Member Budgets is **£ tbc**

7.6 This report has been produced to keep Members informed of the work of the Community Development Officer for the Southern Rural Area.

8. PROJECT/ACTIVITY/SCHEME DETAILS

8.1 St Ippolyts – Dog Fouling Waste Bin

A number of complaints have been received by Cllrs Barnard, Thake & Mrs Allison Ashley, via local residents and walkers who use the walkways along Brick Kiln Lane & Priory Way, regarding the overall level of dog fouling in the area.

The Authority's Enforcement Officer, David Furr, has met with local residents on site and has concluded that the area would benefit from the installation of a Dog Fouling Waste Bin.

The CDM has spoken to Authority's Service Manager for Grounds, Andrew Mills, who has indicated that the provision and emptying of a Dog Fouling Waste Bin for the area, would be in the region of £400 as a one off cost, but currently there were insufficient funds within the section's existing budgets to take on additional provision.

However, if Members were minded to support the funding required, the regular emptying of the bin would be added to the Council's overall Dog Waste Bin maintenance contract from next year.

8.2 Ward Member Grants

Members are to note that the following Ward Member Grants have been proposed & approved over the last two months and where appropriate prior to the 31st March 2013.

Cllr Cathryn Henry

£700 – Gt Ashby CCMA - Circles

Cllr Claire Strong

£200 – Offley Youth Club

Cllr John Bishop

£200 – Kimpton Music Event

8.3 Highways Matters

It is proposed that a section entitled 'Highways Matters' is included within the Area Champion's News Report for each committee cycle to facilitate debate and enable appropriate feedback on any of the proposed or listed schemes. This is to ensure that communication remains effective following the demise of the previous Joint Member Panel for each district.

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.

8.4 Wymondley Meaders

Members may recall that £1,800 of UU/s106 Planning Funding was utilised to assist the club in purchasing major items of equipment last season. Officers are now looking at further routes of funding to assist the club and Parish Council in addressing the drainage issues for the pitch areas at Tower Close and possibly for the provision of a small pavilion on the site, similar to the one recently developed in Weston.

8.5 Knebworth Tennis Club

The CDM has given initial funding advice to the club with regards to the proposal of re constructing a small facility for players to change and shelter prior games and matches.

The CDM has offered to assist in the completion of and to proof read any external funding grant forms the club thinks appropriate.

8.6 Gt Ashby Extension Opening Event

Members are to note that a formal Opening Event for the new extension to the Community Centre at Gt Ashby has been arranged to take place on Saturday 29th June 2013 commencing at 2.00pm.

8.7 Rural Grants Funding Programme 2013/14

Officers are preparing this year's letter and papers for the launch of the Authority's Rural Grant Fund Programme 2013/14.

Target date to get the notification out to all the Parishes and Village Hall Groups is Friday 7th June 2013 with completed application forms due to be returned the end of September in order for the Parish Challenge Panel to convene prior to Christmas.

A ' Quick Guide' to the 3 Grant Funds within this year's programme is attached as Appendix 3.

A summary of the Rural Grants awarded last year is as attached as Appendix 4.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 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.

9.2 Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 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.

9.3 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.

9.4 The Committee has delegated powers to administer funds from the budgets described.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Members are asked to note the information detailed in Appendix 1 of the report, which relates to the Area Committee budget balances for the current financial year 2012/13.

10.2 The spreadsheet also details the pre-allocations carried forward from the previous financial year 2011/12 to the current financial year 2012/13.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no 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.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 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.
- 12.2 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.
- 12.3 The projects which comprise the Community Development 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.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 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.

14. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 There are no pertinent Human Resource implications associated with any items within this report.

15. APPENDICES

- 15.1 Appendix 1 – Area Committee Development Budget Spreadsheet. – To Follow
- 15.2 Appendix 2 – Area Committee Update 2013/14.
- 15.3 Appendix 3 – Quick Guide – Rural Grants Funding Programme 2013/14.
- 15.4 Appendix 4 – Summary of Rural Grants Awarded 2012/13

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17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

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