

**SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE  
25 JULY 2013**

**\*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

**AGENDA ITEM No.**

**8**

**TITLE OF REPORT : CHAMPION NEWS & 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 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

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 **£23,650**

7.4 The current level of unallocated funds within the Committee's MoU Budget is **£5,370**

7.5 The current level of unallocated funds within the Committee's Ward Member Budgets is **£5,571**

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 Ward Member Grants**

Members are to note that the following Ward Member Grants have been proposed over the last two months since the Committee last met .

#### **Cllr David Barnard**

£100 – Dog Fouling Waste Bin – Gosmore / St Ippolyts

#### **Cllr Faye Barnard**

£100 – Dog Fouling Waste Bin – Gosmore / St Ippolyts

#### **Cllr John Bishop**

£200 – Kimpton Music Fundraising Event

#### **Cllr Tom Brindley**

£200 – Codicote Quarry Action Group

£100 – Codicote History Society

#### **Cllr Jane Gray**

£249 – Knebworth PC - Railings

#### **Cllr Cathryn Henry**

£150 – Graveley PC – re Anglia in Bloom

#### **Cllr Sal Jarvis**

£150 – Graveley PC – re Anglia in Bloom

### **8.2 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.

For the longer term, consideration of how proposals are made, handled, prioritised and reported back are included in the scope of a Highways Task and Finish review by NHDC and relevant partners, scheduled to take place in September 2013. The outcomes of that review, and any improvements recommended, will be reported back in due course through the council’s committee system, and of course to Area Committees.

### **8.3 Wymondley - Tower Close Recreation Ground**

The CDM has spoken with Jane Ware from the Parish Council to try and forge a renewed commitment to securing external funding to address the drainage issues for the pitch areas at Tower Close and also the possible provision of a small pavilion on the site, similar to the building recently developed in Weston for local football teams..

8.4 **Knebworth Park Cricket Club**

The CDM and the Authority's Sports Development Officer recently attended a meeting at the Cricket Club with officers from Herts County Cricket Association, Herts Sport Partnership and Sport England.

The club is to submit a planning application to the Authority to consider the relocation of the Cricket Ground and the construction of a larger single story pavilion to the other side of the estate.

NHDC Officers and partner agencies will continue to assist the Club wherever possible through the whole process which is likely to run for at least 3 to 4 years.

8.5 **Gt Ashby Community Centre - External Garden Areas & Hedges**

Following the formal opening of Circles, the CDM is working with representatives from the Community Centre's Management Committee and the Circles team to look at the most appropriate route to take in achieving some enhancement works to the external borders and garden areas to the front of and adjacent to the Centre.

8.6 **Lilley Village Hall**

Renewing of the old lighting system and other works required at the Village Hall. It is likely that the Parish Council will be putting forward a proposal for consideration under the Authority's 2013/14 Rural Fund to hopefully secure a proportion of the funds required.

8.7 **St Pauls Walden**

At the time of writing this report, the CDM was liaising with the Parish Clerk with regard to possible joint funding via the Area Committee Budgets re the provision of a portable Defibrillator for Whitwell. It is likely that a full Area Committee Grant Application will be put before Members for consideration at the next meeting schedule in September.

8.8 **UU's / s106 Contributions & Funding Advice**

The CDM is liaising with the following Parishes re the potential unlocking of existing UU contributions held by the Authority and in cases assisting to compile evidence of need within each community re current and future developments.

**Ickleford** – Listing potential projects for the future

**Gt Offley & Cockernhoe** – Unlocking funds for current initiatives

**Kings Walden** – Unlocking funds for the new Tennis / Recreation Ground Projects

**St Ippolyts Village Hall** – Funding advice re the Authority's Rural Grants Fund

**Pirton** – Advice re development of a Neighbourhood Plan

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 1<sup>st</sup> October 2010, a major piece of legislation. The Act also created a new Public Sector Equality Duty, which came into force on the 5<sup>th</sup> 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 Work Programme 2013/14.

## **16. CONTACT OFFICERS**

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## **17. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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