

**SOUTHERN RURAL AREA COMMITTEE  
THURSDAY 26 SEPTEMBER 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 a funding award of £500 to help support the provision of a community based defibrillator in the Parish of St Pauls Walden as detailed in 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 8.4 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 **£18,050**
- 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 **£5,401**
- 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 Pauls Walden – Provision of a Community Based Defibrillator**

St Pauls Walden Parish Council wish to provide and coordinate any future emergency use of a community based defibrillator machine to serve the St Pauls Walden area and primarily the 800 residents living within Whitwell.

The estimated total cost for the provision, installation (at Whitwell Village Hall) and the training of volunteers within the village on how to operate the machine, is approximately £1,900 plus VAT.

The Parish Council is looking to install the machine and deliver the training element of the project in November 2013 and is seeking a financial contribution from the Southern Rural Area Committee of £500 to help cover the overall costs relating to the initiative.

The application is eligible under the Authority's current Grants Policy criteria re the types of awards which can be made by an Area Committee, it supports community safety and will help to promote community health awareness & well being in the area.

The British Heart Foundation advise that it is good practice to provide defibrillators in rural areas, or where road networks cause sufficient delay to the arrival of ambulances that survival from a cardiac arrest is significantly impaired; every minute a person remains in cardiac arrest without any attempt at CPR or (better) defibrillation, reduces their chance of survival by between 5-10% (dependent on age and other pre-existing conditions).

Parish will look to meet the funding gap from within the budgets it currently has available.

### **8.2 NHDC Rural Grants Fund 2013 update**

Returned grant applications seeking funding from this year's round of Rural Grant Fund have started to be received over the summer months.

Members are advised to signpost / remind contacts within their respective Wards that the deadline for all completed forms to be submitted is 27<sup>th</sup> September 2013.

Officers are currently assisting a number of Parishes re applying and will continue to do so right up to the end of the month to ensure receipt of applications from a wide range of projects and initiatives from Parishes throughout the rural areas of the District.

In brief the overall funding pot for this year's awards is in the region of £40,000 and the three funding streams are:-

- The Community Building Refurbishment Fund – Grants up to £3,000
- The Playground Fund – Grants up to £2,500
- The Environmental Improvement Fund – Grants up to £1,000

### 8.3 **UU's / s106 Contributions & Funding Advice**

The CDM is liaising with the following Parishes re the potential unlocking collected UU contributions held by the Authority and in cases assisting to compile evidence of need within each community re any current and future developments. These are subject to meeting relevant criteria set under regulation and by which the Authority must abide.

**Ickleford** – Listing potential projects and gaps in current provision re future community need.

**Gt Offley & Cockernhoe** – looking at potential projects re the possibility of unlocking funds currently received as well as highlighting future areas of future community need..

**Kings Walden** – looking at potential projects re the possibility of unlocking funds currently received to go towards the newly proposed developments to the Tennis / Recreation Ground.

### 8.4 **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 late 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.

### 8.5 **North Herts Parish, Community & Town Councils' Conference 2013**

This year's date for the Conference has been set for Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2013 at 6pm at the District Council Offices in Gernon Road.

At the time of writing this report, timings and agenda items for the Conference were being finalised, so a verbal update will be giving on the night at the meeting.

All NHDC members whose wards include a rural/parished element will be formally invited, as will all county councillors, shortly. Two representatives will be invited from each parish, town or community council.

## 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.
- 15.2 Appendix 2 – Area Committee Work Programme 2013/14.
- 15.3 Appendix 3 – Area Committee Grant Form – St Pauls Walden PC – Community Based Defibrillator.

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**17. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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