

SOUTHERN RURAL AREA COMMITTEE
19 June 2014

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

AGENDA ITEM No.

7

TITLE OF REPORT: GRANT APPLICATIONS AND COMMUNITY UPDATE

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 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 £1,000 to help support the costs involved in putting on the Codicote Village Day as detailed in Appendix 3 and 8.1 of this report.
- 2.4 That the Committee considers a funding award of £1,000 to the Knebworth Day Centre for assistance with operational costs and First Aid training course fees for volunteers. See Appendix 4 and 8.2 of this report.
- 2.5 That the Committee considers grant funding of £200.00 as one ffth of the cost towards a project for North Herts Samaritans to install CCTV at their HQ in Nuns Close, Hitchin as detailed in Appendix 5 and 8.3 of this report.
- 2.6 That the Committee considers a funding award of £700 to Knebworth Parish Council for renewing and upgrading of office IT equipment. See Appendix 6 and 8.4. of this report.

- 2.7 That the Committee considers a funding award of £550 to the Strawberry Fields Children's Centre, Gt. Ashby for various items of activity equipment See Appendix 7 and 8.5 of this report.
- 2.8 That the Committee considers a funding award of £300 to the Knebworth Town Twinning Association to assist with the group's annual liability insurance fees. See Appendix 8 and 8.6 of this report.
- 2.9 That the Committee considers the funding award of £150 to the Wymondley Parish Council in support of the running of Wymondley Village Day. See Appendix 9 and 8.7 of this report.
- 2.10 That the Committee considers the funding award of £1,500 to the Wymondley Parish Council in support of the provision of a new Sports Pavilion at Tower Close Recreation Ground. See Appendix 10 and 8.8 of this report.
- 2.11 That the Committee considers awarding support funding in relation to any potential Highways schemes as proposed and discussed under section 8.9 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 policy.
- 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 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 2014/15
- 7.2 The spreadsheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial year 2013/14 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 **£24,040**
- 7.4 The current level of unallocated funds within the Committee's former MoU Budget is **£4,990**
- 7.5 The current level of unallocated funds within the Committee's Ward Member Budgets is **£6,500**
- 7.6 The current level of outstanding funds within the Committee's Preallocated Budget for Youth & Sport initiatives is **£3,717**
- 7.7 The current level of outstanding funds within the Committee's Preallocated Budget for Community initiatives is **£3,716**
- 7.8 The current level of outstanding funds within the Committee's Preallocated Budget for Highways Projects is **£3,500**

8. PROJECT/ACTIVITY/SCHEME DETAILS

8.1 Codicote Village Day

Codicote Village Day is an annual festival which begins with a parade along the High Street, with many local residents, businesses & school taking part on carnival floats.

The fete part of the event will be held at the Great Field this year, and attractions will include a Military Vehicle Show, Dog Show, Archery, Baby contest, Sheep Shearing, Owl Display.

There will also be a large amount of stalls, many of which are there to raise funds for their own charities, i.e. The Cat Trust, Brownies, Scouts, Historical Society, Women's Institute, Football, Cricket and Tennis Clubs, Waste not Want not, and numerous other charities.

The Village Day Committee is made up of local volunteers some of whom have been on the Committee for over 20 years.

Finances are raised through donations, advertising in the annual directory, barbeque, and the stall holders' fees, which are currently £15.00 per stall. (Charities are free)

The organising committee is seeking funding support to help purchase an event arena boundary fence and assistance towards the cost of two marquees, all of which will be utilised in future years.

Grant funding of £1,000 is requested although the organisers have stated that the day involves a lot of "Blood Sweat and Tears" each year and would welcome any form of financial aid from the Area Committee.

8.2 **Knebworth Day Centre – First Aid Training Course Fees & Operating Costs**

Grant funding of £1,000 is requested to cover the costs outlined below. The Day Centre is a voluntary run not for profit operation, which provides activities for the frail and elderly of Knebworth. Sessions run every Monday (except Bank Holidays) between 10.00am & 3.00pm at the Deanscroft Centre on Lytton Fields, Knebworth.

The sessions currently attract 15 members, each contributing £5 per week, many of whom are well into their nineties. All activities are staffed by 10 volunteers, many of whom are elderly themselves, 80yrs plus.

The Centre's County Council grant from Adult Care Services was renounced in 2010 and since then the centre and volunteers have strived to continue the weekly sessions without any real core funding. North Herts Homes owns the premises and lets the organisers use the facilities at a subsidised rate (£10pw) as their contribution to the service.

The centre has recently sought support from Age UK, and though sympathetic to their needs, is unfortunately unable to offer assistance of a monetary nature.

The organisers are seeking funding support to get two volunteers trained in basic First Aid (2 x £200) and two other volunteer helpers trained to level 2 in Food, Health & Hygiene (2 x £20).

The centre has annual operational costs for which it is also seeking external funding support:-

2 course meal £45 per week (if it were possible to recruit a cook, this cost could be reduced)

Premises Rental £480

Insurance £130 (charity rate)

Transport Costs £200 (40p per mile petrol subsidy paid to 5 volunteer drivers)

Entertainment (£150)

The Centre will have operated for 25 years on June 24th this year and the organisers wish to continue to offer valuable and vital social activities for those that are reaching a time of their lives where they become vulnerable in many ways and at risk of being excluded from society.

8.3 **North Herts Samaritans**

North Herts Samaritans are requesting £1,000 funding towards instalation of Close Circuit Television for their HQ premises in Hitchin. This is required in order to monitor face to face interviews within the premises, as well as improved security to the building at the front and rear entrances.

As the services provided cover the whole of the district the four other Area Committees will also be asked to consider contributing one fifth of the funding required equating to £200 from each Area Committee.

8.4 Knebworth Parish Council – IT Equipment for the Parish Office

Grant funding of £700 is requested to support the purchase of an A3 printer for use in the Knebworth Parish Council Office. Towards the end of the financial year Cllr Bardett received a request from Knebworth Parish Council asking him to consider a commitment of funds within his 2013/14 Ward Discretionary Budget. The Parish Council is a precepting body and has budgeted to raise a total precept of £134,760 in 2014/15.

8.5 Strawberry Fields Children’s Centre – Equipment & Activity Supplies

Grant funding of £550 is requested by the organisers at the Strawberry Fields Children’s Centre, Gt Ashby to assist in the purchase of essential equipment & activity supplies. Towards the end of the financial year Cllr Sal Jarvis received a request from the organisers of the centre asking her to consider a commitment of funds within her 2013/14 Ward Discretionary Budget.

8.6 Knebworth Town Twinning Association – Liability Insurance

Grant funding of £300 is requested by Knebworth Town Twinning Association towards the costs of £1,000 associated to the group’s annual premium for liability insurance. Cllr Bardett has received a request from Knebworth TTA asking him to consider a commitment of funds within his 2014/15 Ward Discretionary Budget.

8.7 Wymondley Parish Council – Village Day

Grant funding of £150 is requested by Wymondley Parish Council towards the costs of over £500 of the Village Day event. Cllr Cathryn Henry has received a request asking her to consider a commitment of funds within her 2014/15 Ward Discretionary Budget. The Parish Council is a precepting body and has budgeted to raise a total precept of £23,330 in 2014/15.

8.8 Wymondley Parish Council – Pavilion Project

Over the past few months representatives from the Parish Council and Wymondley Meaders FC have drawn together proposals re the provision of a Sports Pavilion / Changing rooms facility at Tower Close Recreation Ground, Little Wymondley.

Members will recall that the previous facility was subject to an arson attack a number of years ago and although not ideal, the resident teams & visiting clubs have been using two converted steel shipping containers as temporary arrangements for changing and showering.

It is widely recognised that there has been some delay in moving this project on, which has been largely due to conceptual ideas of possibly linking the provision of a Village Hall for Little Wymondley with a new pavilion facility on the Recreation Ground. However, owing to logistical constraints and general access issues, it was agreed that the site was not suitable for such a large building and the Parish has moved just to address the renewing of the sporting pavilion at this time.

Planning permission for a new facility has been approved by the Authority and formal tender packs were issued to local construction companies on 30th May 2014. All being well, the project group hope to have the facility finished before the end of summer 2014 and available for use by the football clubs and other groups in September/October this year.

Current site usage includes two Football clubs on a weekly basis during the soccer season. The field was also previously used for cricket, which could be re-introduced, if better changing facilities were available. The new Pavilion will also include a small kitchen, therefore making the facility available to host village celebrations / events, children's activity groups during school holidays and possibly as a Youth / Sports Club on some evenings.

Members will know that Little Wymondley does not have a village hall and therefore lacks a focal point for village events. In the past, the previous Pavilion was used by the community for celebratory events (the completion of the bypass, Fireworks Night etc).

Until the full tender costings are returned, the Parish have estimated the total project costs to be in excess of £80,000.

The Parish is currently holding £55,000 of insurance money relating to the previous pavilion. Subject to approval from the Planning Department, it may be possible to utilise some UU funding to help towards the project in the region of £13,000 but this will need to be confirmed.

The Parish has also considered seeking funding from Herts CDA 'Community Buildings Loan fund' and an application will be submitted once tenders have been received and a more accurate project cost is known.

The Parish Council understands that the maximum level of grant award the Committee may consider is £1,500 and welcomes any financial contribution that Members think appropriate regarding this project.

The Parish Council is a precepting body and has budgeted to raise a total precept of £23,330 in 2014/15.

8.9 Highways Matters

It is proposed that a section entitled 'Highways Matters' is included within the Area Champion's Grant applications and community update 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 is included in the scope of a Highways Task and Finish review by NHDC and relevant partners, which took 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.

8.10 UU's / s106 Contributions & Funding Advice

The CDM is liaising with a number of Parishes re the potential unlocking of collected UU (Unilateral Undertakings) 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.

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 include discretionary grant 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 2014/15.
- 10.2 The spreadsheet also details the pre-allocations carried forward from the previous financial year 2013/14 to the current financial year 2014/15.
- 10.3 In the past few years there has been no inflationary allowance to the Area Committee Budgets and the 2014/15 baseline budget has stayed the same as the previous year.
- 10.4 The former MoU Budget is subject to a 7.1% reduction each year through to financial year 2015/16.

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 2014/15.
- 15.2 Appendix 2 – Area Committee Summary Update 2014/15.
- 15.3 Appendix 3 – Area Committee Grant Form – Codicote Village Day
- 15.4 Appendix 4 – Area Committee Grant Form – Knebworth Day Centre
- 15.5 Appendix 5 – Ward Grant Form – North Herts Samaritans
- 15.6 Appendix 6 – Ward Grant Form – Knebworth Parish Council
- 15.7 Appendix 7 – Ward Grant Form – Strawberry Fields Children's Centre
- 15.8 Appendix 8 – Ward Grant Form – Knebworth Town Twining Association
- 15.9 Appendix 9 – Ward Grant Form – Wymondley Parish Council - (Village Day)
- 15.10 Appendix 10 – Area Committee Grant Form – Wymondley Parish Council

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17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

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