

**SOUTHERN RURAL AREA COMMITTEE
THURSDAY 25 SEPTEMBER 2014**

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

AGENDA ITEM No.

9

TITLE OF REPORT: COMMUNITY UPDATE AND GRANT APPLICATIONS

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 grant award of £417 to Wymondley Parish Council to part fund a village sign for Gt Wymondley as detailed in Appendix 3 and 8.1 of this report.
- 2.4 That the Committee considers a grant award of £460 to Offley Parish Council to part fund initiatives commemorating WW1 as detailed in Appendix 4 and 8.2 of this report.
- 2.5 That the Committee considers grant award of £115 to Great Ashby Youth Club to purchase equipment and books for use on club nights as detailed in Appendix 5 and 8.3 of this report.
- 2.6 That the Committee considers grant award of £363 to Furniture Link to assist in the purchase of a replacement collections van as detailed in Appendix 6 and 8.4 of this report.

- 2.7 That the Committee considers approval of the deferred funding award from June's Area Committee meeting of £700 to Knebworth Parish Council for renewing and upgrading of office IT equipment. See Appendix 7 and 8.5.of this report.
- 2.8 That the Committee considers approval of the deferred funding award June's Area Committee meeting of £300 to the Knebworth Town Twining 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 awarding support funding in relation to any potential Highways schemes as proposed and discussed under section 8.7 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 rose 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 **£18,790**
- 7.4 The current level of unallocated funds within the Committee's former MoU Budget is **£3,990**
- 7.5 The current level of unallocated funds within the Committee's Ward Member Budgets is **£6,050**
- 7.6 The current level of outstanding funds within the Committee's Preallocated Budget for Youth & Sport initiatives is **£2,717**
- 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 Gt Wymondley Village Sign

Over recent months the Parish Council has developed a project for the installation of a village sign for Gt. Wymondley.

The chosen design and preferred supplier has returned a quote of £2,917.27 to which the Parish Council has set aside £1,500 and committed to the sign project.

County Cllr Thake has committed £500 from his County Ward Locality Budget.

Ward Member Gants from both Councillors have been proposed, £300 & £200 by Cllrs Henry & Jarvis respectively.

The Parish Council has therefore asked if the Area Committee would consider approving a grant from its main budget to make up the required balance of £417.

8.2 WW 1 Commemorative Projects within Offley & Cockernhoe

The Parish Council made plans for a number of initiatives to commemorate WW1 These include:-

Planter Tubs with Poppies (Seeds) positioned at the following locations

- 2 at Offley War Memorial
- 1 at Offley School
- 2 at Cockernhoe Memorial Hall
- 1 at Cockernhoe School x 1

Each tub included a range of Poppy seeds, filled with peat plus a pre-printed sign the respective wording.

In addition the War Memorial at Offley was professionally cleaned and two sets of names which had been missed off the memorial were added.

(NB the PC is not seeking grant funding for this part of the project.)

The Parish Council also purchased a New Union Flag plus Cleats to enable the Flag to be raised and lowered to half-mast accordingly.

Breakdown of associated costs (excluding those related to the Memorial)

Planter Tubs	£231.44
Peat Bags	£72.00
Poppy Seeds	£34.83
Signage	£33.73
Flag & Cleats	<u>£87.20</u>
Total	<u>£459.20</u>

The Parish Council has therefore asked if the Area Committee would consider approving a grant from its main budget of £460.

8.3 Great Ashby Youth Club – Equipment & Activity Books

Grant funding of £115 is being sought by the Youth Club at Gt Ashby to help purchase some team building & games activity books and an additional section of protective / safety netting for use on Club nights every Friday at the Gt Ashby Community Centre.

8.4 Furniture Link – Replacement Collections Van

The Furniture Link is seeking support funding of £2,900 in total from the Authority to help towards the provision of a good quality second hand collections van estimated at £14,000.

Furniture Link is a fully independent project of North Herts Centre for Voluntary Services. The service enables residents on low income the opportunity to purchase quality furniture at an affordable price. This service also helps to reduce waste landfill by the re-use of furniture.

The vehicle will replace the existing collections van which is on nearing the end of its economic life and is a vital part of the operation needed to collect and deliver furniture.

As the project covers the whole of the District, each Area Committee is being asked to consider a proportionate contribution.

As a current approximation 50% of those who have used the service have been based in Letchworth, therefore a contribution of £1,450 has already been granted by the Letchworth Area Committee. Additional two sums of £363 have been awarded by both the Hitchin and Baldock & District Area Committees. A further request for £363 is also being heard by the Royston & District Area Committee on 17th September 2014 and this Committee is being asked to consider a similar award of £363.

The balance of funding required is made up from the following sources:-

NHCVS own funds	£4,200
HCC Locality Budget	£2,900
Letchworth GCHF	£3,000
Herts Community Fund	£1,000

8.5 Knebworth Parish Council – IT Equipment for the Parish Office

Grant funding of £700 was requested to support the purchase of an A3 printer for use in the Knebworth Parish Council Office. Towards the end of the last financial year Cllr Bardett received a request from Knebworth Parish Council asking him to consider the commitment of funds within his 2013/14 Ward Discretionary Budget.

This item was raised at the Area Committee's last meeting in June 2014, but owing to a declaration of interest from Cllr Hemmingway, the Area Committee began inquorate and the matter therefore had to be deferred to the next meeting.

8.6 Knebworth Town Twinning Association – Liability Insurance

Grant funding of £300 was 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.

This item was raised at the Area Committee's last meeting in June 2014, but owing to a declaration of interest from Cllr Hemmingway, the Area Committee began inquorate and the matter therefore had to be deferred to the next meeting.

8.7 Highways Matters

This section is included within the community update report for each committee cycle to facilitate debate and enable appropriate feedback on any of the proposed or listed Highways related schemes.

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.

8.8 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.

8.9 Rural Grants Programme 2014/15

Members are advised that the closing date for all grant applications under this year's Rural Grant Programme need to be submitted to the Community Development Team by Friday 27th September 2014.

If Members are aware of any groups / organisations that are considering applying but perhaps in need some assistance / advice, please signpost the applicants onto Alan Fleck or Stuart Izzard within the Community Development team before the closing date.

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 – Gt Wymondley Village Sign
- 15.4 Appendix 4 – Area Committee Grant Form – Offley & Cockernhoe WW1 projects
- 15.5 Appendix 5 – Area Committee Grant Form – Gt Ashby Youth Club
- 15.6 Appendix 6 – Area Committee Grant Form – Furniture Link
- 15.7 Appendix 7 – Ward Grant Form – Knebworth Parish Council
- 15.8 Appendix 8 – Ward Grant Form – Knebworth Town Twining Association

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.