

SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE

9 June 2016

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

AGENDA ITEM No.

7

TITLE OF REPORT: COMMUNITY UPDATE AND GRANT APPLICATIONS

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

PORTFOLIO HOLDER – COUNCILLOR TONY HUNTER, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND RURAL AFFAIRS

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 To advise the Committee on the current expenditure and balances of the Area Committee delegated budgets.
- 1.2 To bring to the Committee's attention details of recent requests received for Area Committee Grant Funding made by community groups and local organisations.
- 1.3 To advise the Committee of the activities and schemes with which the Community Officer has been involved.
- 1.4 To bring to the Committee's attention some important community based activities that will take place during the next few months.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note the budgetary expenditure, balances and carry forwards within the Area Committee Development Budget Spreadsheet attached as Appendix 1.
- 2.2 That the Committee considers a grant award of £1,500 to the John Clements Sports & Community Centre to assist with the provision of Audio Visual equipment, as detailed in Appendix 2 and 8.1 of this report.
- 2.3 That the Committee considers a grant award of £540 to Herts Young Carers to assist with operational costs in running fortnightly Young Carer sessions, as detailed in Appendix 3 and 8.2 of this report.
- 2.4 That the Committee considers a grant award of £1,500 to Citizens Advice North Herts, as detailed in Appendix 4 and 8.3 of this report.
- 2.5 That the Committee considers a grant award of £600 to Offley Recreation Centre to assist the refurbishment works to the Lounge area, as detailed in Appendix 5 and 8.4 of this report.

- 2.6 That the Committee considers a grant award of £1,500 to Whitwell Players to assist in replacing electrical equipment, as detailed in Appendix 6 and 8.5 of this report.
- 2.7 That the Committee considers a grant award of £100 from the Hitchwood, Offa & Hoo Ward Budget 2015/16 to Offley PC to part fund a bench at Mangrove Green, as detailed in Appendix 7 and 8.6 of this report.
- 2.8 That the Committee considers a grant award of £400 from the Hitchwood, Offa & Hoo Ward Budget 2015/16 to Pirton Sports & Social Club to assist with the installation of a new cooker & extractor hood at the facility, as detailed in Appendix 8 and 8.7 of this report.
- 2.9 That the Committee considers a grant award of £200 from the Hitchwood, Offa & Hoo Ward Budget 2015/16 to Offley PC to part fund the provision of village signage, as detailed in Appendix 9 and 8.8 of this report.
- 2.10 That the Committee considers grant award of £100 from the Hitchwood, Offa & Hoo Ward Budget 2015/16 to Breachwood Green Historical Society, as detailed in Appendix 10 and 8.9 of this report.
- 2.11 That the Committee considers a grant award of £100 from the Hitchwood, Offa & Hoo Ward Budget 2015/16 to Breachwood Green Times Newsletter, as detailed in Appendix 11 and 8.10 of this report.
- 2.12 That the Committee considers a grant award of £200 from the Kimpton Ward Budget 2015/16 to the on going works at the Dacre Rooms, as detailed in Appendix 12 and 8.11 of this report.
- 2.13 That the Committee considers a grant award of £200 from the Kimpton Ward Budget 2015/16 to Kimpton PC to help purchase additional litter pickers, as detailed in Appendix 13 and 8.12 of this report.
- 2.14 The Committee is asked to note the activities and schemes with which the Community Officer has been involved.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims and objectives of the Council.
- 3.3 To ensure that the Committee are kept informed of the work of the Community Officer.

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 within this report.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

- 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 2016/17.
- 7.2 The spreadsheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial year 2015/16 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 for 2016/17 is **£15,600**
- 7.4 The current level of funds carried forward for allocation from the Committee's 2015/16 Budget is **£200**

8. PROJECT/ACTIVITY/SCHEME DETAILS

8.1 John Clements Sports and Community Centre

The Southern Rural Area Committee gave generous support for the construction phase of the new Centre and after the first full year of operation the usage results have been very encouraging. Membership to the Centre has tripled to over 500 residents and combined with strong financial results for the year will allow the management trustees to pay off the £8.3k final retention fee by June, thus leaving the Trust almost debt free.

As part of an additional enhancement programme to further guarantee the long term sustainability of the new Centre, an investment has been made in phase 1 of an audio visual system to improve communications throughout the Centre.

This comprises of speakers in the lounge bar and hall, a 4 zone amplifier, an AV junction box, a fixed screen and projector in the lounge bar, a fixed and mobile microphone to all 4 zones and attendant cabling for all.

The £4,830 cost of this has been provided by the Trust with the equipment being installed in early April. All in all this part of the system has been well received by the Centre users.

Phase 2 of the system is now ready to be progressed with the scope and costs set out below

A portable projector and 2m wide screen for the main hall	£1,390
A 55" TV for the lounge/bar to replace the existing 7 year old, 40" TV	£1,040
4 weatherproof outside speakers	<u>£398</u>
Total	£2,828

The additional equipment will permit the showing of sporting, and other popular events and films to larger audiences in the main hall via a range of input sources eg lap top, DVD player or TV. The planned upgrade and additional equipment will not only provide a more up to date and reliable TV in the new Centre, but also provide external speaker links from inside the Centre to the patio, sports field and tennis courts. All of the above will help increase the usage of the Centre and help guarantee its long term sustainability and service provision to the local community.

8.2 Herts Young Carers

Herts Young Carers (HYC) meets fortnightly at Nightingale Day Centre, Hitchin to give emotional and practical support to young carers through recreational activities. Three different themed activities per session: sports / exercise activity, a cookery activity and an arts and crafts 'project'. They provide the young carers with respite and peer support in a safe and fun environment.

Young carers are children and young people who look after someone in their family who has an illness, a disability, or is affected by mental ill-health or substance misuse. Young carers often take on practical and/or emotional caring responsibilities that would normally be expected of an adult. The tasks undertaken can vary according to the nature of the illness or disability, the level and frequency of need for care and the structure of the family as a whole.

A young carer may do some or all of the following:

- Practical tasks, such as cooking, housework and shopping.
- Physical care, such as lifting, helping a parent on stairs or with physiotherapy.
- Personal care, such as dressing, washing, helping with toileting needs.
- Managing the family budget, collecting benefits and prescriptions.
- Administering medication.
- Looking after or "parenting" younger siblings.
- Emotional support.
- Interpreting, due to a hearing or speech impairment or because English is not the family's first language.

Some young carers may undertake high levels of care, whereas for others it may be frequent low levels of care. Either can impact heavily on a child or young person. Carers often suffer ill-health due to their caring role, sometimes physical or psychological. All young carers need support to be able to juggle their education and caring roles.

Herts Young Carers supports young carers in practical and emotional ways. They provide regular respite and peer support. The children and young people are also able to genuinely 'act their age' at the Young Carers sessions and feel safe in a fun environment.

The Group are expecting to grow in order to support as many young carers as possible. The volunteers, who all but one is in full-time employment, many of whom were themselves young carers and can therefore fully appreciate the importance that a Group like this can bring to the children and young people.

HYC require funding towards the cost of craft equipment, volunteer training, volunteer out-of-pocket expenses, running costs, transportation of the children and young people by taxi and occasional outings.

The group was set up in May 2013 over the past 3 years the focus has been on keeping the Group going, making it fully compliant by creating a raft of Safeguarding policy documents, training the volunteers, fundraising and also on maintaining the Group as a place that the young carers want to come to.

HYC currently have 24 young carers attending Group and a waiting list. Following a volunteer recruitment programme in November 2015 they have brought on-board a high quality management committee, in addition to 9 volunteers at each session and 9 trustees. The organisation is now in a position to 'take things to the next level' and become fully sustainable for the future. They aim to become a registered Charity this year and are now in a strong position with stable management and a more strategic approach to funding.

The operational costs have increased significantly over the past few years as the number of Young Carers attending has increased. These will increase with the expected expansion of the group and the recruitment of additional volunteers.

Grant funding is requested towards equipment, materials, volunteer training and expenses, operational costs, promotion and marketing, transport and trips.

Training of volunteers is necessary for Compliance. Volunteers undertake training in: First Aid, Safeguarding Children, Food and Hygiene, Health and Safety. There is a significant list of advisory training for safe running the Group. New volunteers require DBS checking and Safeguarding training as a minimum.

The group are planning for a basic WordPress website to be developed and intend to get business cards and leaflets printed in order to promote the service to the widest audience.

Being a young carer is often about physical and emotional responsibilities. This can result social isolation and being unable to access local activities. Therefore, outings and trips provide an opportunity for them to be themselves and have some fun with friends. When asked about outings, the young carers chose a trip to Bounce (Trampoline Park) in Milton Keynes. In addition, the Christmas trip to Hollywood Bowl and then Pizza Hut in Stevenage has now become a regular, much enjoyed, Festive event.

The highest cost incurred is for transport of the young carers by taxi to the sessions. Their parents are not in a position to bring them to the sessions and a shared taxi with other group-members is the solution to enable them to attend. These costs rise significantly as the Group grows.

HYC have been successful in gaining funding from local organisations that have provided some funding for trips and outings. They have good relations with various

community organisations in Hitchin and are hopeful that the Round Table and Rotary will provide support for another outing. The group continually fundraise via a range of activities including Waitrose Community Matters Charity Donation, fundraising bake sales and quiz nights.

The operational costs per annum are £9,820 for an expected number of 25 young carers. This equates to an annual cost of £392.80 per young carer. As 8 of the young people are based in Stevenage, the Borough Council has provided £3,650 towards the operating costs.

The group is requesting a total of £4,600 from NHDC (to be split between 3 Area Committees which currently have young carers attending). This equates to £270.58 x 17 young carers in the relevant areas.

The group is requesting **£540** to cover the cost of 2 young people who attend from the Southern Rural Area; Herts Young Carers are committed to raise the balance of approximately £3,000.

8.3 **Citizens Advice North Herts**

Citizens Advice North Hertfordshire (CANH) is an independent local charity providing a free, confidential information and advice service. They provide the advice people need for the problems they face, and improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives. They rely heavily on volunteers and are equipped to respond to any issue, covering areas including benefits, debt, employment and housing amongst many others. Their advice is delivered face-to-face from 12 outlets, including housing offices, community centres, county courts, food banks, as well as via telephone, email and access to reliable online information.

This grant application was brought to the Letchworth Councillors in March and grant funding of £8,415 has been provided from their discretionary budgets. On the recommendation of members and on the basis that the service covers all of the district, the remaining £11,585 is now being sought from the remaining four Area Committees and divided by per capita percentage.

They are therefore seeking a contribution of **£3,309** from the Southern Rural Area Committee towards the fit out of a new head office in Letchworth following a move to new premises. The relocation is required as they need more space and a secure long-term home. The current Letchworth office has a tiny waiting room, not enough interview rooms, no training room and nowhere near enough desk space for staff and volunteers. The current rent is £18,000 per year and the landlord wants to raise it to £25,000. The current 3 year lease ends in June 2016. The new premises in 49 Station Road is owned by the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation and offers much better value for money with approximately twice the floor area for £19,800 per year on a 15 year lease. It will enable an increase from 3 to 5 interview rooms to see more clients face-to-face clients, double the Advice line phone capacity, and train more volunteers. More efficient hot-desking is planned in order to maximise use of office space. Demand from clients has risen by 30% over the past two years, and volunteer numbers have risen over 10% over the past 6 months. They aim to double the number of advice calls handled to 2,000 per year, dramatically increase the amount of financial capability training offered to reduce debt issues, and expand the provision of energy advice to relieve fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency. They now have a member of staff trained to undertake thermal imaging to inform residents where energy efficiency improvements could be most effective. It will enable them to continue their core work to support the most vulnerable people across North Hertfordshire with benefits, debt, housing, employment and family issues.

The new premises contains the last remaining original Parker and Unwin shop front in Letchworth, and the Heritage Foundation has agreed to pay for an external refurbishment and internal strip out of the building, to include new heritage windows and restoration of the original shop front. The CANH will pay for the creation of four new interview rooms, flooring, lighting, power and data, additional desks, chairs and telephones, security alarm, an accessible toilet, as well as upgrades to kitchen, toilets, heating and ventilation systems.

CANH are seeking grant funding of £20,000 from North Hertfordshire District Council towards the cost of the fixtures and fittings for the new premises.

The Letchworth head office is open for drop-in five mornings a week and appointments in the afternoons. The new premises will have a much bigger waiting room, 5 interview rooms instead of 3 and a dedicated training and Adviceline room as well as more office space generally. This will make it possible to recruit more volunteers, see more clients, answer more calls, and offer more preventative work such as financial capability training to reduce debt issues, and energy advice to reduce fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency. It will also assist the organisation by providing a secure foundation on which they can build to diversify the funding for the future.

In 2015, Citizens Advice North Herts supported almost 5,400 individual clients with over 11,000 issues (up from 4,500 with 10,000 issues in 2014/15). 12% of North Herts clients are from the Southern Rural area covered by the local area committee. The self-help advice on the website is well used and allows residents to access the information they need, enabling the CANH to manage increasing demands on the service. For those who need in-depth advice, many residents from this area use the Hitchin office (open 2 days a week for drop-ins and appointments), the main office in Letchworth (open 5 days a week), or call for telephone advice. Demand for telephone advice is high in rural areas. The move to the new premises in Station Road will allow the service to meet growing demand for face-to-face services, double the amount of telephone advice the service can offer, and train volunteers from across the district.

Benefits for clients from this area in 2015 included over £97,000 in financial outcomes generated. Broken down by ward this equated to £24,000 for Hitchwood, Offa and Hoo residents, £18,000 for Chesfield, £16,000 for Codicote, £16,000 for Cadwell, £13,000 for Knebworth and £10,000 for Kimpton. Most of this relates to securing disability benefits for those who need this support. These benefits make a huge difference to quality of life, and reduce the demand on health, statutory and other voluntary sector services. While national success rates for Disability Living Allowance applications are 60%, our specialist caseworkers and highly trained volunteers have a near 100% success rate.

A comparison of Southern Rural area issues in 2015 relative to the average for North Herts show that overall benefits, relationships and employment issues are broadly in line with district averages at 32%, 15% and 14% respectively of the top 5 issues compared with 34%, 16% and 13% across the district. Debt issues are higher than average in Southern Rural at 27% of the top 5 issues compared with 24% across North Herts. Housing issues are lower than average at 12% compared to 17% across the district. There was a higher demand for Attendance Allowance and Disability Living Allowance, often required by the elderly and disabled. Where there were debt issues in the area, credit, store & charge card debts were higher than the district average of 9% at 16%. Rent arrears with housing associations, were slightly higher than the district average at 38% compared to 35%. In terms of housing, issues with private rented sector housing were significantly higher than North Herts levels of 27% at 45% of the top 5 issues. Issues with owner-occupier property and environmental & neighbour issues were also high at 19% respectively.

Members should be aware that, North Hertfordshire District Council currently provides the CANH with a three yearly Memorandum of Understanding of £145,430 towards the annual running costs, in addition a further £25,000 annually towards the cost of a court worker in order to best reduce incidence of homelessness. There are also in-kind contributions in terms of rate relief of approximately £20,000 on three premises in Letchworth, Hitchin and Royston. Also rent subsidies, in-kind contribution of maintenance on the NHDC premises at Thomas Bellamy House in Hitchin and Royston Town Hall Annex, as outlined below:

Level of Subsidised Rents

Thomas Bellamy House & Royston Town Hall Annex 6,000 per site

Service Charges (In Kind)

Thomas Bellamy House £4,482 & Royston Town Hall Annex £8,804

In 2010 the CANH moved offices from the Old Grammar School building on the Broadway to its current location on Leys Avenue. To assist in this process the CANH was awarded a £35,000 capital grant via the NH LSP in the administering of the Performance Review Grant funding (Treasury Funds) passed on via HCC.

Comparison with other Hertfordshire authorities has demonstrated a continuing desire by the majority of authorities to maintain adequate funding for CAB advice services, albeit the amounts vary considerably from authority to authority. The population statistics also give a very approximate indication of potential level of demand for the services provided, but much will depend on levels of deprivation, priority areas for the individual authority i.e. homelessness, levels of debt etc.

For 2014/15, figures were

District / Borough	Population	Funding provided to CAB	Other info
North Herts	131,000	£145,430	plus <i>(as stated above)</i>
Broxbourne	95,700	£144,000	plus £39k for specialist (housing) court worker
Stevenage	86,000	£170,000	
East Herts	143,000	£129,000	(13/14 figures)
Hertsmere	102,400	£215,000	
Dacorum	149,700	£172,000	
Welwyn Hatfield	116,000	£80,750	
Watford	95,500	£243,692	
Three Rivers	90,400	£297,340	

The above table may be of assistance to Members in order to set the local figures into a County wide context. In discussions between senior officers the CANH board of trustees to consider any arrangement with NHDC to use a floor of the Council Offices for their operations it was concluded that this would not be practical, as the timescale for the completion of the newly refurbished Council Offices would be too late for the relocation of the CANH due to the lease at their current premises expiring prior to this date.

8.4 **Offley Recreation Centre – Refurbishment of the Lounge**

Offley Recreation Centre was burgled last October resulting in a high level of wanton damage.

All of the CCTV cameras were destroyed and the thieves took away the hardware in order that they couldn't be traced. The Alarm system proved to be inadequate and the police were notified along with the insurance company.

The police have made great efforts to try and find the culprits but to no avail. The Alarm and CCTV systems have both been replaced and the Management group are now seeking funding to refurbish one of the lounges where the new equipment has been installed.

Estimates for the works are £1,244 for which the group is seeking a contribution of £600 from the Area Committee's main budget.

8.5 **Whitwell Players - Replacement of electrical equipment**

Whitwell Players is an amateur dramatic club with more than 100 members ranging from 5 to 95. The Players' programme of performances and activities helps to promote good community relations, benefitting many other local groups in some way or another.

Alongside children & young people, the Players we have wide range of adults who take part in acting or behind the scenes, actively encouraging others to join in. They also offer the chance for members to learn new skills and this year younger members learnt about lighting and sound engineering with experienced members at hand to guide them through their respective tasks & roles.

In the past the group has given a proportion of its profits to the wider community. For example in 2014 it gave £500 to Sue Ryder, £500 to the local primary school, supported the Evergreens with a donation of £100 and provided financial support to a Philippines disaster coffee morning. In 2016 the group has been able to support Dementia UK with a donation of £500 and hopes to continue support to other local causes as required.

However without future productions these donations will become even harder to pass on, but this is the very essence of what the Players are about and why they choose like to help other good causes The Players are however minded that a proportion of their profits each year should be held back in reserves in future to perhaps help tackle such improvements to the performance facilities at the hall, or other costs related to keeping everything going.

The Players wish to replace electrical installations and lighting equipment which is more than 40 years old at their resident venue, Whitwell Village Hall.

Wiring and dimmer racks need upgrading to maintain the safe aspect of their use. Although the hall is a public building, Whitwell Players feel that they should help facilitate the works as they are the main, if not sole user.

The group is seeking funding for the following works:-

Phase 1

Incoming power supply to dimmer board	
Distribution board	
Connection to existing dimmer	
Connection to existing wall sockets	£1,100

Phase 2

Lightprocessor1810 dimmer panel	£1,599
Downstream power wiring including 36 dimmed	
Wall sockets and raw power sockets for future	
DMX controlled lights	£2,500

Total cost of project £5,199 ex vat

Estimated Grand Total **£6,239**

8.6 Bench at Mangrove Green – Hitchwood, Offa & Hoo Ward Grant

Offley Parish Council is seeking a small grant award of £100 from the Hitchwood, Offa & Hoo Ward Budget 2015/16 to assist in the provision of bench at Mangrove Green.

The Parish Council is a precepting body which has the power to raise funds for such projects in its own right.

8.7 Pirton Sports & Social Club – Hitchwood, Offa & Hoo Ward Grant

Pirton Sports & Social Club is looking to replace the cooker & extractor hood as part of an ongoing scheme of works in enhancing the facility.

Works include some electrical installation & connections costs with a total project cost of £1,259.

The Sports & Social Club is seeking £400 funding support from the Hitchwood, Offa & Hoo Ward Budget and has indicated to meet the funding gap via its own reserves and other fundraising.

8.8 Offley Parish Council Village Signage – Hitchwood, Offa & Hoo Ward Grant

Offley Parish Council is seeking a small grant award of £200 from the Hitchwood, Offa & Hoo Ward Budget 2015/16 to assist in the provision of signage within the Parish.

The Parish Council is a precepting body which has the power to raise funds for such projects in its own right.

8.9 Breachwood Green Historical Society – Hitchwood, Offa & Hoo Ward Grant

The Breachwood Green Historical Society is seeking a small grant award of £100 from the Hitchwood, Offa & Hoo Ward Budget 2015/16 to assist the Society in covering operational costs.

8.10 Breachwood Green Times Newsletter – Hitchwood, Offa & Hoo Ward Grant

The Breachwood Green Times coordinators are seeking a small grant award of £100 from the Hitchwood, Offa & Hoo Ward Budget 2015/16 to assist with the costs in producing the newsletter over the year.

8.11 **Dacre Rooms – Enhancement Works – Kimpton Ward Grant**

The management group at the Dacre Rooms is seeking further financial support in the form of a small grant award of £200 from the Kimpton Ward Budget 2015/16 to assist in the continuing enhancements to the facility.

8.12 **Kimpton Parish Council – Litter Pickers – Kimpton Ward Grant**

The Parish Council on behalf of the Village's Annual Litter Picking coordinating group is seeking a small grant award of £200 from the Kimpton Ward Budget 2015/16 to assist in the provision of 18 additional litter pickers for use by voluntary groups and organisations at various initiatives & events within the village throughout the year.

The Parish Council is a precepting body which has the power to raise funds for such projects in its own right.

8.13 **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.

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

The CM 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 aid/financial support but excluding grants for district-wide activities. The Committee has delegated powers, as a body, to allocate discretionary budgets and devolved budgets within the terms determined by the Council.

9.2 Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides a General Power of Competence which gives local authorities the power to do anything that individuals generally may do. This may be for, or otherwise than for the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident in its area.

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 **as a body** has delegated powers to administer funds from the budgets described. Whilst individual ward members may comment on and support (or not) any grant application put before the committee, the decision to award is afforded only to the Southern Rural Area Committee itself under the Council's Constitution and provided such committee is quorate at the time of such decision.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 In the past few years there has been no inflationary allowance to the main Area Committee Budget. From the 2016/17 financial year, a proposal was made through the council's corporate business planning process to reduce the overall amount the council awards by way of grants, both area committee and district wide, by a suggested 20%. Following member workshops, there was a request that whilst the principle of saving approximately £86k of revenue was supported, the current level of district MoUs should be retained, thus the area committee element was reduced by a greater amount.
- 10.2 Appendix 1 provides details of the 2016/17 budget position for the Area Committee.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no relevant risk entries that have been recorded on Covalent, the Council's performance and risk system. Individual events should have their own risk assessments in place to mitigate any health and safety issues. Whenever a request for grant funding for equipment is received, the recipient of the funding will be advised to obtain insurance for the item to avoid a repeat request for funding in the event of the equipment being stolen or damaged. There are no pertinent risk implications for the Authority associated with any items within this report.

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 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 2016/17.
- 15.2 Appendix 2 – Grant Form – John Clements Sports & Social Centre
- 15.3 Appendix 3 – Grant Form – Herts Young Carers
- 15.4 Appendix 4 – Grant Form – Citizens Advice North Herts
- 15.5 Appendix 5 – Grant Form – Offley Recreation Centre
- 15.6 Appendix 6 – Grant Form – Whitwell Players
- 15.7 Appendix 7 – Ward Grant Form – Bench at Mangrove Green
- 15.8 Appendix 8 – Ward Grant Form – Pirton Sports & Social Club
- 15.9 Appendix 9 – Ward Grant Form – Offley PC – Village Signage
- 15.10 Appendix 10 – Ward Grant Form – Breachwood Green Historical Society
- 15.11 Appendix 11 – Ward Grant Form – Breachwood Green Times Newsletter
- 15.12 Appendix 12 – Ward Grant Form – Dacre Rooms, Kimpton
- 15.13 Appendix 13 – Ward Grant Form – Kimpton PC – Litter Pickers

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17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

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