

**SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE
10 OCTOBER 2016**

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

AGENDA ITEM No.

6

TITLE OF REPORT: COMMUNITY UPDATE AND GRANT APPLICATIONS

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND RURAL AFFAIRS,
COUNCILLOR TONY HUNTER,

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 ward grant award of £100 from the Chesfield Ward Budget 2015/16 (Cllr Tyler) to the organisers of the Wymondley Village Day to assist with the running of this year's event, as detailed in Appendix 2 and 8.1 of this report.
- 2.3 That the Committee considers a ward grant award of £200 from the Cadwell Ward Budget 2015/16 to assist with the provision of new village notice boards, as detailed in Appendix 3 and 8.2 of this report.
- 2.4 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 expressed in the Corporate Plan.
- 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 **£8,606**
- 7.4 The current level of unallocated within the Committee's Ward Members 2016/17 Budget is **£5,000**

8. PROJECT/ACTIVITY/SCHEME DETAILS

8.1 Wymondley Village Day – Ward Grant Request

The Village Day organising group is seeking financial support in the form of a small grant award of £100 from the Chesfield Ward (Cllr Tyler) Budget 2015/16 to assist in the running of this year's village day.

8.2 Holwell Village Notice Boards – Ward Grant Request

The village is seeking a small grant award of £200 from the Cadwell Ward Budget 2015/16 to assist in the provision of new noticeboards within the village.

8.3 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.

8.4 UU's / s106 Contributions & Funding Advice

The CM is liaising with a number of Parishes and rural groups 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.

Current Parishes / groups seeking advice / support:

- **Offley & Cockernhoe PC** – major enhancements to facilities at the Recreation Centre utilising £214k s106 developer contributions.
- **St Ippolyts PC** – possible enhancement works at Dell Field utilising £500 Informal Open Space UU contributions
- **Kimpton Rugby FC** – funding advice re enhancing existing floodlights for evening training purposes
- **Knebworth PC** – outstanding award £250 from January 2016 for tree works at Norton Green Common
- **Kimpton** – ongoing programme of enhancement works to Dacre Rooms & utilising UU contributions £4.5k
- **Ickleford PC** – enhancement works to Children's Play Area utilising UU contributions £13.8k
- **Kimpton Tennis Club** – new club pavilion utilising UU contributions £7.5k
- **Ickleford Village Hall** – funding advice and utilisation of UU contributions £8k to renew the Village Hall's boiler and heating system

- **Graveley Cricket Club** – funding advice & Rural Grant of £2.5k re the installation of dedicated electricity supply to the pavilion.
- **Codicote Play Ground Support Group** – utilising £2.7k UU contributions for renewing play equipment at Newton / Valley Road play area
- **Pirton PC** – utilising £300 UU contributions re bike rack at the Village Hall
- **Offley PC** – utilising £600 UU contributions re bench at Mangrove Green
- **Graveley PC** – Rural Grant of £869 re enhancements to children’s play area
- **Gt Ashby Community Centre** – Rural Grant of £2.5k re enhancements to children’s play area at the rear of the main building

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 and outlined in the current Grant Policy agreed by Cabinet in June 2016.
- 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 – Ward Grant Form – Wymondley Village Day
- 15.3 Appendix 3 – Ward Grant Form – Holwell Village Notice Boards

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17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

17.2 Review of Grants Policy Report to Cabinet June 2016.