

Public Document Pack

17 November 2017

Our Ref Southern Rural 11.17
Your Ref.
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To: Members of the Committee: Councillor David Barnard, Councillor Cathryn Henry, Councillor John Bishop, Councillor Steve Deakin-Davies, Councillor Faye S Frost, Councillor Jane Gray, Councillor Steve Hemingway, Councillor Harry Spencer-Smith, Councillor Claire Strong and Councillor Terry Tyler

You are invited to attend a

MEETING OF THE SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE

to be held in the

**ICKLEFORD VILLAGE HALL, ARLESEY ROAD, ICKLEFORD
SG5 3TG**

On

THURSDAY, 30TH NOVEMBER, 2017 AT 7.30 PM

(PLEASE NOTE VENUE)

Yours sincerely,



David Miley
Democratic Services Manager

Agenda **Part I**

Item	Page
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
2. MINUTES - 5 OCTOBER 2017 To take as read and approve as a true record the minutes of the meeting of this Committee held on the 5 October 2017.	(Pages 1 - 10)
3. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS Members should notify the Chairman of other business which they wish to be discussed by the Committee at the end of the business set out in the agenda. They must state the circumstances which they consider justify the business being considered as a matter of urgency. The Chairman will decide whether any item(s) raised will be considered.	
4. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS Members are reminded that any declarations of interest in respect of any business set out in the agenda, should be declared as either a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Declarable Interest and are required to notify the Chairman of the nature of any interest declared at the commencement of the relevant item on the agenda. Members declaring a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest must withdraw from the meeting for the duration of the item. Members declaring a Declarable Interest which requires they leave the room under Paragraph 7.4 of the Code of Conduct, can speak on the item, but must leave the room before the debate and vote.	
5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION To receive petitions and presentations from members of the public including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Offley Recreation Centre – Junior Soccer Section; 2. Offley Fishing Club – Junior Section; 3. Ickleford Sports Club. 	
6. GRANTS AND COMMUNITY UPDATE REPORT OF THE COMMUNITIES MANAGER To update the Committee on the activities and actions of the Communities Officer, to advise on the current expenditure and balances of the delegated budgets and to consider applications for grant funding.	(Pages 11 - 22)
7. INFORMATION NOTE - GREEN SPACE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY INFORMATION NOTE OF THE HEAD OF LEISURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES	(Pages 23 - 36)

To provide an update regarding the steps taken and the progress made in identifying interested groups and organisations to safely provide play area facilities previously provided by the Council.

8. WARD MATTERS AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS - MEMBERS' REPORTS

To receive any oral reports from Members regarding Ward matters and Outside Organisations.

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NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD IN THE FOUNDATION HOUSE, ICKNIELD WAY, LETCHWORTH
GARDEN CITY ON THURSDAY, 5 OCTOBER, 2017 AT 7.30 PM

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors Councillor David Barnard (Chairman), John Bishop, Jane Gray, Harry Spencer-Smith and Claire Strong*

In Attendance:

Andrew Mills (Service Manager - Grounds Maintenance), Colin Broadhurst (Licensing Officer), Stuart Izzard (Communities Manager) and Hilary Dineen (Committee and Member Services Officer)

Also Present:

At the commencement of the meeting approximately 11 members of the public.

24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Steve Hemingway, Cathryn Henry and Terry Tyler.

25 MINUTES - 6 JULY 2017

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 July 2017 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

26 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

There were no notifications of other business.

27 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (1) The Chairman reminded everyone that, in accordance with Council policy, the meeting was being audio recorded;
- (2) Members were reminded that any declarations of interest in respect of any business set out in the agenda, should be declared as either a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Declarable Interest and are required to notify the Chairman of the nature of any interest declared at the commencement of the relevant item on the agenda. Members declaring a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest must withdraw from the meeting for the duration of the item. Members declaring a Declarable Interest which requires they leave the room under Paragraph 7.4 of the Code of Conduct, can speak on the item, but must leave the room before the debate and vote;
- (3) The Chairman advised that the next meeting of this Committee, due to be held on 30 November 2017 would be the annual pre-Christmas meeting. He asked Members if they had any suggestions for venues.

Members considered whether to meet off-site for every meeting, but agreed that the current practice of only meeting off-site for the pre-Christmas meeting should be continued.

Members suggested that investigations be made into the availability of Knebworth Village Hall and St Ippolyts Village Hall for the next meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED: That the Committee and Member Services Officer be requested to identify a suitable venue for the next meeting of this Committee, taking into account the suggestions of this Committee to consider Knebworth Village Hall and St Ippolyts Village Hall.

28 COUNTRYSIDE MANAGEMENT SERVICE

Charlotte Carter, Countryside Management Service (CMS), advised that CMS was part of Hertfordshire County Council's Environment Department. It had been in operation for 42 years and was part funded by District and Borough Councils.

CMS worked with communities in Hertfordshire helping them to care for their local environment.

Activities could be divided into three areas being:

The Land Management Team

The Land Management Team was responsible for producing Management Plans for Hertfordshire's green infrastructure such as nature reserves, green spaces, redundant railway lines, rivers and the rights of way network.

They worked to secure funding from external sources including Lottery Funding, development off-setting and landfill communities cap.

The Land Management Team also managed contracts to manage habitat and access improvement works in green spaces.

The Communities Team

Project officers from the Communities Team worked with volunteers to conduct many of the actions contained in the Management Plan, including habitat and access improvement works.

Hertfordshire Health Walks

The Hertfordshire Health Walk project officers co-ordinated approximately 300 Health Walk Leaders, who then enabled thousands of walkers to enjoy their local green spaces therefore gaining the mental and health wellbeing benefits of experiencing the outdoors and being active.

Volunteering and working with the local community was central to the work undertaken by CMS.

Councillors were kept informed of the work undertaken by CMS by attending meetings such as this one.

CMS conducted guided walks around the sites that they managed, which were open to Councillors and usually open to the general public, which helped them to inform people about the work that was happening in their green spaces and gain some understanding about the importance of the site for ecology as well as the historical context of the site.

CMS had three groups of midweek volunteers who undertook conservation activities such as installing boardwalks, cutting back scrub, and planting trees, including a group that visited all of the North Herts owned sites.

There were 25 "Friends of" groups who were the eyes and ears regarding the green spaces, which was a great help to the landowners, which was usually the Local Authority. These groups also undertook some practical work as well.

The rights of way volunteers undertook surveys of the footpaths and bridleways across the District, assess the condition and flag up any work required and undertake some of the work required.

Management Plans were developed using a set process that involved the community during the development of the plan.

The Green Space Action Plans were map based plans which set out the aims and objectives for the management of a site over a 5 year period and detailed how those aims and objectives would be achieved.

The development of each plan started with a briefing document, which would be sent out to Councillors. This document outlined the background of and the core aspirations for the site and gave stakeholders the opportunity to feed into the Management Plan by making comments about the content, which would be considered when developing the draft Management Plan.

The draft Management Plan gave more detail about how the aspirations mentioned in the briefing document would be achieved. This document would then be sent out for consultation, which was available to members of the public as well as stakeholders.

The final Management Plan was drawn up following that consultation and therefore shouldn't contain any information that wasn't already known about.

This process was a great way to get people involved and to help them understand what was happening in their local environment.

In respect of Pryors Wood, Great Ashby, the Management Plan had been through the briefing stage and one of the main aspirations for this site was to integrate and fully connect Priors Wood into the wider District Park.

This site was previously managed by the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, but was now under the management of NHDC and one of the aims was to make it clear to visitors that they were on an NHDC owned site and the connection with the District Park.

Members asked how they worked with the different District throughout Hertfordshire

Ms Carter advised that CMS worked in partnership with the District and Borough Councils and worked together with them to develop the management plans

The Service Manager – Grounds Maintenance advised that CMS was one of NHDC's key partners for maintaining the more environmentally sensitive sites and were a resource of technical expertise.

The Grounds Maintenance Team were urban park managers and they were very reliant on CMS regarding the more sensitive maintenance of green areas.

Green Space Action Plans were in place for many areas including Oughtonhead Common, Purwell Meadows and Norton Common and these could be accessed via the NHDC website. These demonstrated the types of work being undertaken including boundary maintenance and the introduction of the grazing of cattle.

NHDC was working to be more environmentally friendly in the work undertaken, whilst also managing the costs. Involving the public and volunteers was a key factor and CMS was a key partner in managing that process.

Thursday, 5th October, 2017

Councillor Gray, Executive Member for Leisure, endorsed the work undertaken by CMS and the partnership working between them and NHDC Grounds Maintenance. She informed Members that the Great Ashby Distract Park was a wonderful area to visit.

Members suggested that CMS be requested to organise a walk through Pryors Wood and the District Park and that all Councillors from NHDC and Great Ashby Community Council be invited.

Ms Carter advised that CMS undertook many guided walks and that some of these were combined with special events such as the introduction of grazing at a site.

A Member commented that, particularly on Oughtonhead Common, the introduction of grazing cattle had meant the installation of unsightly barbed wire fencing, which had been placed in very visible areas rather than in tree or bush lines that may reduce the visual impact. She also commented that the river had changed over the years to the extent that people could no longer get to the water's edge.

Ms Carter advised that the fencing had been placed in that location in order to increase the amount of grassland under favourable management.

The Service Manager-Grounds Maintenance advised that a lot of public consultation had been undertaken regarding the placement of the fencing and that consultation highlighted that there was some concern expressed that people would be enclosed within the cattle grazing area. The current location of the fencing enabled the maximum area for grazing, whilst taking into account the comments received.

More cattle would be placed on Oughtonhead Common and as the effect of that grazing takes place, the ecology of the area would change.

In respect of the rivet running alongside Woolgrove Road, a Member commented that this was now covered with wild watercress and the water was no longer visible.

The Service Manager – Grounds Maintenance informed Members that the project currently being undertaken in that location was to constrict the width of the water course and allowing the vegetation to increase was deliberate. The river passing Walsworth Common was a chalk stream, one of only 200 in the world, and was very ecologically sensitive. The watercourse had become so wide that there was very slow or no water flow, this affected the purpose of the chalk stream which was to create and clean the riverbed to expose the chalk. The flow could only be increased by narrowing the width of the stream and this had been achieved by creating flow deflectors to attempt to recreate the meandering effect of the stream. One of the benefits of the vegetation was that, in periods of heavy rainfall or flood, the flow of water would be slowed allowing it to percolate into the surrounding ground water table therefore helping to reduce the risk of flooding downstream.

The habitat in that area was improving and diversifying and the stream will no longer be a wide stagnant pool of water with no life, but will become a flowing watercourse that meanders through the riverbed and be full of life and diversity.

A walk and talk event was held sometime ago in this area and residents expressed that they were very keen to encourage biodiversity and it was pleasing to be able report that a few fish have already returned to the water course and there had been evidence of water voles and otters. This area would continue to be managed and cleaned out when required.

A Member noted the return of fauna in the area and that this was continuing to be encouraged and queried whether there was any regime of predator management. In respect of litter on Oughtonhead Common he queried whether there was a litter picking programme,

The Service Manager- Grounds Maintenance advised that John O'Connors litter picked along the bridle way, reports of illegal camping, barbeques etc were responded to and monitoring regimes were increased during school holiday periods. The team also worked closely with volunteers, without whom the site would deteriorate. The volunteer did an amazing amount of work and were fastidious.

In respect of predator management, the water course was being monitored for mink, which so far had not been sighted. If mink were sighted, there was a process in place to deal with them.

The Chairman thanked Ms Carter for her interesting presentation.

RESOLVED: That the Countryside Management Service be requested to organise a walk around Pryors Wood and the District Park and that all Councillors from NHDC and Great Ashby Community Council be invited to attend.

REASON FOR DECISION: To promote the work done by the Countryside Management Service in North Hertfordshire.

29 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - CODICOTE FOOTBALL CLUB

Mr Craig Rathbone, Codicote Football Club, thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee and gave a verbal presentation in support of their application for grant funding.

Mr Rathbone informed Members that Codicote Football Club currently played in Step 6 of the Football Pyramid. They moved back to play in Codicote last season having put in a stand and floodlighting following fundraising efforts.

The Club was now quite substantial, having moved back with just a senior side and now having introduced under 18, under 17, under 16, under 15, under 12, under 8 and under 7 teams, all using the same recreation ground. One team had to play away as they couldn't be supported on the pitch.

As well as the Codicote teams, the pitch was rented to Stevenage Ladies Football Club who played on Sunday afternoons.

In 2015 the Club commissioned a report regarding the playing surface from Cranfield University who put forward a number of recommendations regarding fertilisation, grass cutting and verti-draining. This report had been submitted to the Parish Council, Sport England and the English Cricket Board.

The football surface had been looked after by the Parish Council however, due to understandable constraints, the work necessary to provide a good surface had not been undertaken by them.

There was a senior pitch and a junior pitch on site and the application for grant funding related mainly to the senior pitch, although the equipment requested could be used in the junior pitch as well.

The Club had a small proactive committee who were keen to take on the maintenance of the pitches and to build the club.

The Football Association had undertaken further ground assessment and it was hoped that grant funding could also be sought from them.

The equipment required to maintain the ground to an acceptable level included a light roller, a mobile sprayer, and ultimately a sit on tractor and grass cutting equipment.

In response to questions from Members, Mr Rathbone advised that they had been playing at Hertford Town and Gosling Stadium in Welwyn Garden City. In respect of the youth teams, during the summer they trained at the ground in Codicote, and during the winter they trained on an artificial surface.

Members of the Club paid membership fees, which contributed towards equipment and sponsorship helped with match strips.

A funding application had been made to London Luton Airport, but this had been refused, mainly due to the Social Club having received considerable funding in previous years

The Chairman thanked Mr Rathbone for his presentation.

30 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - KNEBWORTH YOUTH PROJECT

Ms Lynda Brookes, Knebworth Youth Project, thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee and gave a verbal presentation in support of their application for grant funding.

Ms Brookes informed Members that she was a member of the Knebworth Youth Project Management Committee and that the Project had been running for almost 10 years.

The project was set up following consultation with the teenagers on the village as part of the Parish Plan preparations.

The project met twice a week with Friday's being a lively session for 10 – 13 year olds and Thursday were for the older age group, which currently consisted of 15 – 20 young people, mainly boys.

The Project was well attended and well supported by two paid youth workers and a team of 8 volunteers working on a rota basis.

They were relatively stable financially in that the overheads were covered and staff costs were paid by grant funding from Knebworth Village Trust and a bequest managed by Trinity Church. The premises were donated by Trinity Church and Knebworth Parish Council.

The sessions were free to attend in order to keep it as inclusive as possible, although they did invite donations. This ethos meant that there was a mixed social group attending each session.

The Project was currently struggling with the cost of providing activities for the evening sessions and were requesting grant funding to support the weekly activities as well as possibly provide dance and sports instructors. There was also a need for volunteers to attend training such as first aid.

Members asked whether there were any aspects that could be charged for such as refreshments, which would help support the Project.

Ms Brookes advised that a tuck shop was operated on a Friday, which made a small profit.

Members recommended that the Project also apply to their County Councillor for grant funding.

The Chairman thanked Ms Brookes for her presentation.

31 **CONSULTATION IN RELATION TO THE PROPOSED STREET TRADING POLICY 2018-2025**

The Licensing Officer presented a report in respect of the proposed Street Trading Policy 2018-2025. He advised that consultation had commenced on a revised Policy, part of which was to seek the views of Area Committees.

He acknowledged that the Street Trading Policy did not affect any of the villages in the Southern Rural area, but was keen to discover whether street trading caused problems in any of the rural areas and whether there were any areas that would fall within the remit of the Policy.

By way of background, the Licensing Officer explained that the Council had adopted the appropriate Street Trading legislation in 2005. In Street Trading terms, a “street” was a road, footway or other areas to which the public had free access (eg. car parks, shopping arcades). Street Trading was the selling of goods that could be purchased and taken away at the time of purchase.

The Licensing Officer further explained that Charter Markets were exempt from Street Trading, as were shops that displayed some of their wares outside their frontages. Typically, Street Trading covered burger vans, ice cream vans, ad hoc markets and community events. In this latter regard, he stated that the revised Policy sought to continue to those parts of the existing Policy which provided encouragement for community events.

The Licensing Officer advised that the Council was able to designate streets as consent streets, where its consent was required to be able to trade within such streets; prohibited streets, where trading would not be permitted at any time; or not to designate at all. In 2005, the Council had chosen to designate as consent streets all streets within the District’s four main towns and the arterial roads which linked them. Village roads/streets had been excluded from such designation.

The Licensing Officer commented that the Policy did not contain any prohibited streets, but appended to it was a list of streets where consent would not normally be granted.

In respect of Advertising Boards (A Boards) and tables and chairs outside restaurants/cafes, the Licensing Officer confirmed that those matters did not fall within the remit of street trading, but were instead the responsibility of Hertfordshire County Council under the Highways Act 1980.

The Licensing Officer stated that the main objective of the Policy was to protect the public from unregulated street traders. The Policy also aimed to make things easier for community events to go ahead without having to go through the same process as commercial operators. Accordingly, it was possible for an annual Town Centre consent to be issued to an appropriate Town Centre organisation (such as a BID company or Community Events Forum), so that all community or commercial operators wishing to trade within the town could approach the Town Centre organisation for permission to use their annual consent. A cost could be levied on a commercial operator for use of the consent, with no charge for not-for-profit community organisations. This principal could be used in villages, if it was believed that there were problems that needed controlling through the Policy, whereby the Parish Council could hold a village consent if required.

Members queried whether the Parish Councils had been consulted regarding this Policy and questioned the stance, stated in the Policy, that an application for a street trading consent would normally be refused where the applicant had previously had a consent revoked.

The Licensing Officer advised that Parish Councils had not been consulted, but the Area Committees had. In respect of Paragraph 3.4.2 of the Policy, he would advise Members of the information in due course

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the report be noted, and the following comment considered by the Licensing Officer in the final version of the proposed Street Trading Policy 2018-2025:
- (2) That the Licensing Officer be requested to inform Members of the rationale regarding Paragraph 3.4.2 of the Policy.

REASON FOR DECISION: To provide local input into the proposed Street Trading Policy 2018-2015.

32 GRANTS AND COMMUNITY UPDATE

The Communities Manager informed Members that applications for grant funding had been sparse this year and this had been evident across the whole of the District and asked Members to remind groups that grant funding was available.

He also reminded Members about the Capital Projects Fund that was available for groups to apply for sums between £10,000 and £50,000 for capital works.

Kimpton Dacre Rooms had already made an application, which had been successful and talks were being held with Pirton Village Hall and Holwell Village Hall.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the activities and schemes with which the Communities Manager has been involved with, as set out in the report, be noted;
- (2) That the budgetary expenditure, balances and carry forwards within the Area Committee Development Budget spreadsheet, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be noted.

REASON FOR DECISION: To ensure that the Southern Rural Committee is kept informed of the work of the Communities Manager and to inform Members of the financial resources and current budgetary position.

33 GRANT APPLICATION - CODICOTE FOOTBALL CLUB

The Communities Manager advised that the Club finances were well managed and that they had been successful in getting grant funding for the stand and floodlighting.

The Area Committee had previously provided grant funding of £5,000 towards the floodlights in 2015 and a further £1,000 in March 2016 towards the cost of providing mobile shelters.

Members were keen to support Codicote Football Club and were particularly impressed by the number of youth teams playing as part of the Club and acknowledged that the emerging Playing Pitch Strategy relied on club facilities such as this to meet the objectives.

In light of the Grant Policy that restricted organisations from applying for funding every year, it was proposed and seconded that £1,250 be awarded to Codicote Football Club.

RESOLVED: That grant funding of £1,250 be awarded to Codicote Football Club from the 2017/18 Discretionary Budget towards the costs associated with the purchase of equipment requires to maintain the pitches..

REASON FOR DECISION: To improve services provided by local organisations and groups which are accessed by the community.

34 GRANT APPLICATION - KNEBWORTH YOUTH PROJECT

The Communities Manager advised that Knebworth Youth Project last received grant funding from this Committee of £500 in 2011.

The project was seeking grant funding towards the cost of activities during the two sessions held each week and training for volunteers.

He informed Members that Councillor Hemingway had requested that his Ward Budget of £500 be put towards this project and that there was £500 from the 2016/17 Ward Budget for Knebworth, which had not yet been allocated.

Members asked whether the Project undertook any fundraising initiatives.

The Communities Manager advised that no fundraising was undertaken, but the group did apply for grant funding from various sources.

Members acknowledged that the Youth Project was thriving and that they wished to support it and it was proposed and seconded that a total of £1,350 be awarded to the Knebworth Youth Project to be taken from the following budgets:

2017/18 Ward Budget – Councillor Hemingway	£500
2016/17 Ward Budget – Councillor Deakin-Davies	£500
2017/18 Discretionary Budget	£350

RESOLVED: That total grant funding of £1,350 be awarded to Knebworth Youth Project towards the cost of providing weekly activities and volunteer training to be taken from the following budgets:

2017/18 Ward Budget – Councillor Hemingway	£500
2016/17 Ward Budget – Councillor Deakin-Davies	£500
2017/18 Discretionary Budget	£350

REASON FOR DECISION: To improve services provided by local organisations and groups which are accessed by the community.

35 WARD MATTERS AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS - MEMBERS' REPORTS

There were no Member's reports regarding Ward matters or outside organisations.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm

Chairman

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SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE 30 NOVEMBER 2017
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*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT	AGENDA ITEM No. 6
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TITLE OF REPORT: GRANTS & COMMUNITY UPDATE

REPORT OF THE COMMUNITIES MANAGER

EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND RURAL AFFAIRS

PRIORITY: ATTRACTIVE AND THRIVING / PROSPER AND PROTECT / RESPONSIVE AND EFFICIENT

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To advise the Committee on the current expenditure and balances of the Area Committee 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, which conform to the Authority's Grants Policy approved by Cabinet on June 14th 2016.
- 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 That the Committee be recommended to consider the provision of grant funding to the organisations outlined below:
 - 2.1.1 Offley Recreation Centre, Junior Soccer Section - £120 Ward Grant as outlined below in 8.1.1
 - 2.1.2 Offley Fishing Club Junior Section - £140 Ward Grant as outlined below in 8.1.2
 - 2.1.3 Kimpton History Group - £980.00 Ward Grant as outlined in 8.1.3
 - 2.1.4 Ickleford Sports Club -£ 950.00 as outlined below in 8.1.5
- 2.2 That the Committee endorses the actions taken by the Communities Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being for the Southern Rural Area.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To ensure the Committee is kept informed of the work of the Communities 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 by assisting in the effective financial management of the Area Committee's budget. This ensures that all actions are performed in line with the Authority's Financial Regulations, the Council's Constitution, and the guidance of the existing Grants policy as agreed by Cabinet in June 2016.
- 3.3 The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims of the Corporate Plan.

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 included 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 bodies/groups has taken place with regard to funding proposals for Area Committee 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 Southern Rural Area Committee Budget Spread sheet, which relates to the Area Committee budget balances for 2017/18.
- 7.2 The spreadsheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial years, including balances and past expenditure.
- 7.3 The current level of unallocated funds within the Committee's Development Budget for 2017/18 is **£8,600**.
- 7.4 The current level of unallocated within the Committee's Ward Members 2017/18 Budget is **£4,150**.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 Grant Applications for Consideration

8.1.1 Offley Recreation Centre, Junior Soccer Section – Ward Grant Cllr Strong

The Offley Recreation Centre is requesting £120 to purchase practice footballs for the junior soccer section. If funding is agreed this will be released subject to the receipt of safeguarding policies as per the Authority's grant criteria

8.1.2 Offley Fishing Club Junior Section – Ward Grant Cllr Frost

The Offley Fishing Club has started up a junior section and has requested £140 towards the cost of purchasing junior sized kits. These will include high-visibility vests, whips with associated parts and landing nets.
If funding is agreed this will be released subject to the receipt of safeguarding policies as per the Authority's grant criteria.

8.1.3 Kimpton History Group – Ward Grant Cllr Bishop

A meeting has been held between the Communities Manager and Bob Malcolm, Juliet Morton, Tom Goldsmith (HCC Rights of Way) and Isobel Crozier (Countryside Management Services) to discuss two village walking maps – public footpaths and heritage trail.

It is hoped that the group will take this project forward with a designer that CMS use for 'Walking in Hertfordshire' leaflets as this has received a tendering process to ensure value for money and resulted in good quality designs.

From Kimpton's perspective it would be sensible if the two maps were linked with the same branding and also because some of the information will overlap. The walking maps will be produced in hard copy and online (HCC and Kimpton village websites so links can be included).

Bob Malcolm and Juliet Morton have volunteered to devise the walks.

The leaflet for public footpaths is being funded by a P3 (Parish, Paths Partnership) grant so we're asking if you would consider supporting the design and printing of a heritage trail leaflet that will be overseen by Kimpton History Group. A quote has been received from Paul Martin Associates for £980 to cover the cost of design, artwork and to re-draw the Kimpton village centre map and the printing of 500 copies.

8.1.4 Ickleford Sports Club

Ickleford Sports an Recreation Club have requested £950.00 to repair the path and paving which leads from the car park to the entrance to the clubhouse.

There are numerous broken paving slabs and some have lifted, resulting in the path being in a dangerous condition and a hazard to all those who use it.

In a standard week in the winter they have over 150 people using the sports facilities. Although the profits from bar sales are sufficient to run the clubhouse and pay the associated bills, there is not enough left over for essential repairs and maintenance of the building.

The building was first opened in 1975 and since that time only essential repairs and maintenance have been undertaken due to the prohibitive cost of any improvement and updating work. The building is now getting old and is requiring additional maintenance in order to keep it operational and safe.

The sports club is open to all and is widely used by the local and wider community. It is a valuable asset to the village and has a thriving membership of girls, boys, men and women.

It is the only sports field in the village and is strongly supported by the Parish Council who recognises the importance of having such a facility in the village. Two Parish Councillors are currently serving on the club's committee.

A break down of the costs of this project is outlined below:

Lift the 27 broken slabs and dig out existing base.

Re-lay new slabs on a new base and renew the concrete around the drain cover at the entrance to the car park end of the path.

Materials (including waste removal) are £450.00 and it is 2 days labour for 2 men, costing £500.00 Total £950.00

The club are currently seeking additional funds from Ickleford Parish Council for other repair work that is urgent throughout the clubhouse building. They have also been granted £500 from Cllr. David Barnard's Hertfordshire County Council's Locality Budget for urgent repairs to the bar floor which have now been completed

8.2 Update on Community Engagement

8.2.1 UU's / s106 Contributions & Funding Advice

The Community Development Team is liaising with a number of Parishes and rural groups re the potential unlocking of collected UU (Unilateral Undertakings) & s106 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.

The Officers are also liaising with a number of community facilities within the Southern Rural Area re potential applications to the Authority's Community Facilities Capital Projects Funding Scheme. The scheme is currently open to community groups and organisations seeking capital funding assistance for awards between £10k & £50k to help enhance local community facilities in order to make them sustainable for future years.

Current Parishes / groups seeking advice / support:

- **Offley & Cockernhoe PC** – Major enhancements to facilities at the Recreation Centre utilising £214k s106 developer contributions and improvements to facilities at the village hall. Plus advice & support re a current Capital Projects Grant application to refurbish the Cricket Pavilion.
- **Holwell Parish Council** – Advice & support re capital funding to renew the Cricket / Football Pavilion and potential application to the Authority's new Community Facilities Capital Projects Improvement Funding Scheme and assistance from NHH.
- **Pirton Parish Council** – Advice & support re UUs & s106 funding.
- **Pirton Village Hall** – Advice & support re capital funding to provide an additional room for rental, improvements to the kitchen facilities and better storage.
- **Knebworth Parish Council** – Advice & support re the drawing down of UUs & s106 funds re enhancements to play equipment at Lytton Fields.

- **St Ippolyts** - Advice & support re the drawing down of UUs & funds to help fund the new provision of external gym / exercise equipment located at the recreation ground.
- **Lilley Village Hall & PC** – General grant funding advice re enhancements to the Village Hall and the possibility of developing a future Capital Projects Grant application.
- **Codicote** – John Clements Sports & Community Centre, advice & support re a current Capital Projects Grant application re the provision of a Health & Wellbeing Discovery Centre unit within the Centre itself.

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.

9. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Section 9.8.2 (g) of Constitution in respect of Area Committees' Terms of Reference provides that they may: "establish and maintain relationships with outside bodies/voluntary organisations operating specifically with the area including, where appropriate, the provision of discretionary grant aid/financial support etc. but excluding grants for district-wide activities". The Area Committees also have delegated power under section 9.8.1 (a) & (b) 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 powers to do anything:-
- An individual may generally do
 - Anywhere in the UK or elsewhere
 - For a commercial purpose or otherwise, for a charge or without a charge
 - Without the need to demonstrate that it will benefit the authority, its area or person's resident or present 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.

10. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 All Area Committees saw a 55% decrease in funding in the 2016/17 financial year. There are 4 meetings in the 2017/18 Committee cycle and members must ensure that sufficient funding is available for all meetings.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no relevant risk entries that have been recorded on Pentana Performance, 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 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their 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.
- 12.2 All projects that are assigned area committee funding are assessed to ensure that they do not negatively impact on any part of the local community. The only deviation to this is where a minority or marginalised 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 The Social Value Act and "go local" policy do not apply to this report.

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 A – Southern Rural Committee Budget Sheet 2017/18

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.
- 17.2 Review of Grant Policy Cabinet June 2016

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SOUTHERN RURAL AREA COMMITTEE BUDGET 2017/18

SUMMARY/ TOTALS	<u>Funding</u>	<u>Allocated</u>	<u>Spent</u>	<u>Outstanding</u>	<u>Unallocated Budget</u>						
<u>Development Budget Brought Forward from 16/17</u>	£3,200	£2,200	£600	£1,600	£1,000						
<u>Development Budget 17/18</u>	£10,600	£3,000	£1,750	£1,250	£7,600						
<u>Preallocated Member Ward Budgets Brought Forward from 16/17</u>	£3,450	£3,450	£2,450	£1,000	£0						
<u>Member Ward Budgets 17/18</u>	£5,000	£850	£850	£0	£4,150						
TOTAL	£22,250	£9,500	£5,650	£3,850	£12,750						

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<u>DEVELOPMENT BUDGETS 1617</u>	<u>Funding</u>			<u>Project</u>	<u>Allocated</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Spent</u>	<u>Outstanding</u>		<u>Unallocated Amount</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Preallocated Funds Brought forward from 2016/17	£3,200			Gt Ashby Community Gardening Project	£427	03.12.15	£0	£427			Original allocation £1500 spent £1073 balance to remain allocated pending re further planting / works in the future
(includes £1000 transferred from Highways Projects b/fwd budget as proposed 06/07/2017)				Lilley Village Hall	£1,173	03.03.16	£0	£1,173			VH Committee to submit revised project papers & costings prior to grant being released
				Ickleford Village Hall Pre-School	£600	02.03.17	£600	£0			
	£3,200				£2,200		£600	£1,600		£1,000	

<u>DEVELOPMENT BUDGETS 17/18</u>	<u>Funding</u>			<u>Project</u>	<u>Allocated</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Spent</u>	<u>Outstanding</u>		<u>Unallocated Amount</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Base Budget 17/18	£10,600			St Ippolyts United FC	£900	18.08.17	£900	£0			Determined via Delegated Authority 18/08/17
				Whitwell Film Club Project	£500	18.08.17	£500	£0			Determined via Delegated Authority 18/08/17
				Knebworth Youth Club	£350	05.10.17	£350	£0			
				Codicote FC	£1,250	05.10.17	£0	£1,250			Awaiting further information from Club prior to the funding being released
	£10,600				£3,000		£1,750	£1,250		£7,600	

<u>PREALLOCATED MEMBER WARD BUDGETS</u>	<u>Funding</u>			<u>Project</u>	<u>Allocated</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Spent</u>	<u>Outstanding</u>		<u>Unallocated Amount</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Preallocated Member Ward Budgets Brought forward from 2016/17	£3,450										
Cllr Jarvis		Chesfield		Wymondley Village Day	£100	10.10.16	£100	£0			
				Youth Initiatives	£100	01.12.16	£0	£100			Awaiting relevant project to assign funds
Cllr Barnard		Hitchwood, Offa & Hoo		Hexton Community Petanque Project	£100	02.03.17	£0	£100			Project still at development stage
				St Pauls Walden Litter Picking Scheme	£100	02.03.17	£0	£100			CD to purchase from Veolia and pass to the working group
				St Pauls Walden - Mother & Toddler Group	£50	06.07.17	£50	£0			Detemined via Delegated Authority 18/08/17
Cllr Frost		Hitchwood, Offa & Hoo		St Pauls Walden Litter Picking Scheme	£100	02.03.17	£0	£100			CD to purchase from Veolia and pass to the working group
				Hexton Community Petanque Project	£100	02.03.17	£0	£100			Project still at development stage
				St Pauls Walden - Mother & Toddler Group	£100	06.07.17	£100	£0			Detemined via Delegated Authority 18/08/17
Cllr Strong		Hitchwood, Offa & Hoo		Hexton Community Petanque Project	£200	02.03.17	£0	£200			Project still at development stage
				Offley Village Hall Kitchen	£300	06.07.17	£300	£0			Detemined via Delegated Authority 18/08/17
Cllr Deakin - Davies		Knebwoth		Knebworth Youth Club	£500	05.10.17	£500	£0			
Cllr Gray		Codicote		Codicote Neighbourhood Planning Forum	£500	06.07.17	£500	£0			Detemined via Delegated Authority 18/08/17
Cllr Tyler		Chesfield		Strawberry Fields Children's Centre	£200	02.03.17	£200	£0			
				For Allocation	£300			£300			
Cllr Henry		Chesfield		Strawberry Fields Children's Centre	£200	02.03.17	£200	£0			
Cllr Spencer-Smith		Cadwell		Ickleford Village Pre-School	£500	02.03.17	£500	£0			
	£3,450				£3,450		£2,450	£1,000		£0	

<u>MEMBER WARD BUDGETS 17/18</u>	<u>Funding</u>			<u>Project</u>	<u>Allocated</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Spent</u>	<u>Outstanding</u>		<u>Unallocated Amount</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Base Budget 17/18 (£500 per Member)											
Cllr Barnard	£500	Hitchwood, Offa & Hoo		St Pauls Walden - Mother & Toddler Group	£50	06.07.17	£50	£0			Determined via Delegated Authority 18/08/17
Cllr Frost	£500	Hitchwood, Offa & Hoo									
Cllr Strong	£500	Hitchwood, Offa & Hoo									
Cllr Deakin-Davies	£500	Knebworth									
Cllr Hemmingway	£500	Knebworth		Knebworth Youth Club	£500	05.10.17	£500	£0			
Cllr Henry	£500	Chesfield									
Cllr Tyler	£500	Chesfield									
Cllr Spencer-Smith	£500	Cadwell									
Cllr Gray	£500	Codicote		Codicote Local History Society	£300	18.08.17	£300	£0			Determined via Delegated Authority 18/08/17
Cllr Bishop	£500	Kimpton									
	£5,000				£850		£850	£0		£4,150	

SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE 30 NOVEMBER 2017
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*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT	AGENDA ITEM No. 7
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TITLE OF INFORMATION NOTE : GREEN SPACE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

INFORMATION NOTE OF THE HEAD OF LEISURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR LEISURE

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This information note details the steps taken and the progress made in identifying interested groups and organisations to safely provide play area facilities previously provided by the Council.

2. STEPS TO DATE

2.1 CABINET

At the 24 January 2017 Cabinet meeting the following was:

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the results of the consultation, as identified in the body of the report, be noted, and that it be further noted that Cabinet was satisfied that demographics and size of the focus groups were appropriate for the type of consultation, and that the views of young people and children who were the main users of these facilities had been included in the consultation results;
- (2) That the draft new Green Space Management Strategy (GSMS) 2017 – 2021, as attached at Appendix A to the report, be formally adopted;
- (3) That it be noted that, prior to removing facilities identified in the Strategy, the Council shall allow up to 1 March 2018 for interested parties to put forward sustainable proposals that would fund both the capital and revenue requirements to safely continue to provide such facilities, and that a proactive approach be adopted in seeking community groups to take on facilities, including advertising that support would be offered to guide groups through the process, particularly through use of social media;
- (4) That the work programme in the new Green Space Management Strategy be incorporated into the 2017/18 budget setting process; and
- (5) That, so far as Cabinet's authority is required in respect of any variation to the contract with the Grounds Maintenance contractor, to give effect to any future revenue saving options identified within the GSMS, such authority be delegated to the Head of Leisure and Environmental Services, in consultation with the Executive Member for Waste, Recycling and Environment.

REASON FOR DECISION: To best enable the retention of the green space within the budgets available to the Council.

2.2 OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

On the 15 February 2017 Overview & Scrutiny received a call-in of the decisions made by Cabinet on 24 January 2017 – Review of Green Space Management Strategy and it was:

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the decisions made by Cabinet on 24 January 2017 regarding the Review of the Green Space Management Strategy not be referred back to Cabinet;
- (2) That the Head of Leisure and Environmental Services be requested to produce a report detailing the steps taken and the progress made in identifying interested groups and organisations to safely provide facilities and present it to this Committee at the meeting due to be held on 18 July 2017;
- (3) That the Head of Leisure and Environmental Services be requested to produce a report detailing the steps taken and the progress made in identifying interested groups and organisations to safely provide facilities, together with details of play areas that have not attracted any interested groups and would likely close following the deadline of 1 March 2018 and present it to this Committee at the meeting due to be held in March 2018.

REASON FOR DECISION: To enable the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the Call - In of decisions made by Cabinet on 24 January 2017 regarding the Review of the Green Space Management Strategy.

2.3 LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN.

In addition to the Overview & Scrutiny call in, a formal complaint was made to the Local Government Ombudsman. The Ombudsman found no fault with the Council and endorsed our method of consultation with the use of focus groups.

2.4 ACTIONS TAKEN AND PROGRESS

A communication plan has been produced and is shown at appendix A. It lists agreed actions between Jan 2017– April 2018.

As per the agreed actions in the Councils adopted Green Space Management Strategy 2017-2021 pavilions identified as being beyond economic repair have now been closed. (Bakers Close, Baldock, St. Johns Road, Cadwell Lane and Walsworth Common, Hitchin.) Prior to removing pavilions there is a period of time until 1st March 2018 for interested parties to put forward sustainable proposals.

Also as per the agreed actions in the Councils adopted Green Space Management Strategy 2017-2021, Local neighbourhood play areas identified as lower usage shall have until 1st March 2018 for interested parties to put forward sustainable proposals. (13 sites)

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS TAKEN

2.4.1 Pavilions

Date	Action
Feb 2017	All current users of football pavilions contacted seeking expressions of interest for asset transfer. Appendix B details letter sent to existing users.
Feb 2017	Received expression of interest from interested party for use of Bakers Close pavilion as venue for beer festival. (later withdrawn)
Feb 2017	Contacted Hertfordshire Football Association for interest in asset transfer of pavilions
Feb 2017	Met with Hitchin Sunday Football League. Provided detailed information on maintenance and repairs required to pavilions.
Feb 2017	Expression of interest received from Hitchin Town Youth FC. Provided detailed information on maintenance and repairs required to pavilions.
Feb 2017	Received outline business case from community group for use of Bakers Close pavilion. Detailed business case to follow later in year.
April 2017	Followed up Sunday Football League for proposals for pavilions.
April 2017	Followed up Hitchin Town Youth for proposals for pavilions (No response)
April 2017	Complaint received from Sunday Football League re closure of pavilions.
May 2017	Received expression of interest from St. Johns FC to take on St. Johns pavilion. Provided detailed information on maintenance and repairs required to pavilion. Various meetings took place between May – August.
June 2017	Received expression of interest from Albion FC to take on Cadwell pavilion. Provided detailed information on maintenance and repairs required to pavilion. (Later withdrawn).
Aug 2017	Private company expressed interest in Bakers Close pavilion as fitness centre. Currently developing business case.
July 2017	Emailed community group for update on proposals for Bakers Close pavilion.
Sept 2017	Local Government Ombudsman response to a complaint found no fault with Council and endorsed use of focus groups.
Oct 2017	Emailed St. John's FC for update on business case.

2.4.2 Play Areas

Date	Action
Jan 2017	Article in Mercury paper requesting asset transfer of play areas.
Feb 2017	Contacted 38 residents who expressed an interest in play areas for expressions of interest for asset transfer.
Feb 2017	Contacted 46 PTA's and 85 community groups seeking expressions of interest for asset transfer.
Feb 2017	Play area information sheet on Web site (see appendix C)
Feb 2017	Contacted Royston Town Council and North Herts Homes seeking interest in asset transfer.
Feb 2017	Met with Gt. Ashby Council re options for play area. (They are undertaking residents survey results due in July)
Feb 2017	Tweeted offer of support for community groups.
Feb 2017	Provided Royston Councillors maintenance cost of play areas.
Mar 2017	Article in Comet paper requesting community groups to run play areas.
Mar 2017	Article in Royston Crow paper requesting community groups to run play areas.
Mar 2017	Article in Comet online requesting community support for Rosehill play area.
Mar 2017	Contacted Town Centre managers for funding for play areas.

Mar 2017	New sponsorship page on web site (see appendix D) Emailed link to Town Centre Managers & NHDC Business development officer to include in business newsletter.
Mar 2017	Met with planning to discuss future options for new play areas.
Apr 2017	Community management signs erected in 13 play area (see appendix E)
Apr 2017	Royston Town Council resolved not to fund play areas.
May 2017	Met with Community group who expressed interest in taking on Jackmans Recreation Ground play area.
May 2017	Petition received to save Rosehill play area.
June 2017	Community Development working on a business plan with Community group who expressed interest in taking on Jackmans Recreation Ground play area.
Sept 2017	Gt. Ashby Community Council expressed interest in taking on 3 play areas and funding new equipment for those listed as minimal investment.
Oct 2017	Contacted Hitchin Members with proposal for Rosehill play area.
Oct 2017	Mr Hall confirmed he was in the process of setting up community group to take on responsibility for Jackmans play area.

3. INFORMATION TO NOTE

3.1 SUMMARY OF PROGRESS MADE

Colour	Status
	No interest from third parties
	Expressions of interest received
	Interested group secured

3.1.1 Pavilions

Site	Progress
Bakers Close Pavilion, Baldock	Outline business case received from community group to develop as social club with retained changing rooms and additional community use. Awaiting final business case.
St. Johns changing rooms, Hitchin	Expression of interest received from St. Johns FC to take on building. Provided detailed maintenance cost and condition survey. Community Development working with St. Johns FC on business case.
Cadwell Lane changing rooms, Hitchin	Expression of interest received from Albion FC to take on building. Later withdrawn.
Walsworth changing rooms, Hitchin	No expressions of interest received for existing building. Aiming to secure section 106 money for new build in 2020/21.

3.1.2 Play Areas

Site	Progress
Generic	Seeking sponsorship of some of our larger play area sites, which may generate additional income to offset the cost to help retain some of the smaller sites. We are also seeking opportunities for alternative play provision in the locality of our existing play areas through negotiations with landowners and stakeholders.
Betjeman Road, Royston	No interest from Royston Town Council. Royston District Councillors seeking options for alternative funding.
Farrier Court, Royston	No interest from Royston Town Council.
Ivel Road, Baldock	No expressions of interest received.
Dacre Road, Hitchin	No expressions of interest received.
Rosehill, Hitchin	Lots of community support to retain play area. Officers have potentially found a long term sustainable solution to retain a children's play area for the residents of Rosehill. Officers will be recommending to Cabinet in March 2018 that the existing play facility remains until such a time as a new play area is provided in the locality by an independent provider which it is expected would be at nil cost to the Council.
Symonds Rd, Hitchin	No expressions of interest received.
Jackmans Recreation Ground, Letchworth	Expression of interest received from community group to fund play area. Community Development working with group to formalise status.
Linnet Close, Letchworth	Some community support to retain play area. No offers of funding.
Oaktree Close, Letchworth	No expressions of interest received.
Chilterns, Gt. Ashby	Gt. Ashby Community Council have agreed to take on responsibility of play area.
Cleveland Way, Gt. Ashby	Gt. Ashby Community Council have agreed to take on responsibility of play area.
Fairfield Crescent, Gt. Ashby	Play area reclassified as not having formal play equipment.
Merrick Close, Gt. Ashby	Gt. Ashby Community Council have agreed to take on responsibility of play area..

4. NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 In March 2018 provide a progress report to Overview & Scrutiny and report to Cabinet on any completed or proposed asset transfers.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Communication Plan
Appendix B: Letter sent to existing pavilion users
Appendix C: Play Area information sheet
Appendix D: Parks Sponsorship page

6. CONTACT OFFICERS

Steve Geach
Parks & Countryside Development Manager
Ext 4553
Email: steve.geach@north-herts.gov.uk

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Green Space Management Strategy 2017-2021

**COMMUNICATION PLAN
OUTLINE TIMELINE FOR COMMUNICATIONS – GSMS**

Timing	Action	Who is responsible?	Complete
Jan 2017	Article in local press seeking interested parties for asset transfer	Comms	Yes
Feb	Contact residents who expressed an interest in play areas	SG	Yes
Feb	Contact local football clubs advising of closure of pavilions and seeking interest in asset transfer	SG	Yes
Feb	Contact Herts FA seeking interest in asset transfer	SG	Yes
Monthly	Inform Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee	SG	ongoing
Feb	Meet with Gt. Ashby Community Council re asset transfer of play areas	SG	Yes
Feb	Meet with Sunday Football League seeking interest in asset transfer	SG	Yes
Feb	Contact PTA's of all Schools in District seeking interest in asset transfer	SG	Yes
Feb	Produce information pack/toolkit for asset transfer of play areas	SG	Yes
Feb	Publish information pack/toolkit on a web page on NHDC website	SG	Yes
Feb	Contact community groups who may have an interest in asset transfer	SG	Yes
Feb	Press release	Comms	Yes
Feb	Social media	Comms	Yes

March/April	Erect notices in play areas seeking interest in asset transfer	SG	Yes
April	Contact local companies for sponsorship of play areas	SG	Yes
June	Article in Summer Outlook seeking interest in asset transfer	Comms	Yes
June/July	Social media	Comms	Yes
July	Progress report to Overview & Scrutiny	SG	Yes
Oct/Nov	Press release – last chance	Comms	Yes
Oct/Nov	Social media – last chance	Comms	Yes
Oct/Nov	Briefing note for Area Committees	SG	Yes
March 2018	Progress report to Overview & Scrutiny	SG	
March	Report to Cabinet on any completed or proposed asset transfers	SG	
April	Erect removal of equipment notices at play areas not transferred explaining what will happen to the site	SG	
April/May	Remove equipment and landscape sites not transferred	SG	
March/April	Article in Spring Outlook promoting importance of green space	Comms	

Letter sent to existing pavilion users

Dear

On the 24th January 2017 the Council's Cabinet discussed the future of green space and adopted a four year Green Space Management Strategy to ensure its protection in North Herts. The following link provides details of the Cabinet report listed at item 9. Appendix A. details the adopted 2017-2021 Green Space Strategy.

<http://web.north-herts.gov.uk/aksnherts/users/public/admin/kab14.pl?operation=SUBMIT&meet=102&cmte=CA B&grpid=public&arc=71>

You will see that the stated aim of the strategy is 'to provide a sustainable, strategic approach for the future management of green space'. The key driver of the strategy is to retain and maintain the green space in our urban environments for current and future generations to enjoy.

In relation to Football Pavilions:

The Council recognises that many of its pavilions are beyond economic repair and costly to maintain. It has been agreed that at the end of the current football season, the following pavilions shall be closed: St. Johns Road, Cadwell Lane and Walsworth Common, Hitchin.

The Council will allow up to 1 March 2018 for interested parties to put forward viable proposals for the transfer of these facilities to a third party.

If you feel you may have a viable proposal please contact North Hertfordshire District Council on 01462474553 or email steve.geach@north-herts.gov.uk.

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Play Area information sheet

Managing a play area

In order to ensure continued investment in its major play areas, the Council is looking for interested parties to put forward viable proposals that would fund both the maintenance and as required the replacement of the equipment for some small play areas.

These play areas include:

Dacre Road, Rosehill and Symons Rd play areas in Hitchin;

Jackmans Recreation Ground, Linnet Close and Oaktree Close play areas in Letchworth;

Ivel Road play area in Baldock;

Betjeman Road & Farriar Court play areas in Royston; and

Chilterns, Cleveland Way, Fairfield Crescent and Merrick Close play areas in Gt. Ashby

Firstly, if not already established you will need to form a legally recognised body such as a registered Friends of Group or Residents Association. Our Community Development team will be happy to assist you in this. Please contact our Community Manager, Stuart Izzard on 01462 474854 or email stuart.izzard@north-herts.gov.uk.

What we will do

The Council will transfer the play area to the group in the form of a 25 year lease. The lease will be legally binding and it is recommended that you obtain your own legal advice to ensure you are happy with it. The lease will stipulate what the Council expects from you and what you can expect from the Council.

The Council will continue to maintain the grass and any trees or shrubs that may be present along with litter picking the area and emptying the bins.

What you will do

In summary you will become responsible for the regular inspection and maintenance of the play area including the equipment, safety surfacing, litter bins, seat, fencing etc. You will also be responsible for the replacement of equipment as and when required.

You will need to take out your own public liability insurance. This [charity insurance page](#) provides useful information on insurance and other information of interest to community groups.

Inspections and risk assessments

The play area must remain open for general public use and the Council expects you to maintain it in a safe and clean condition for use.

Currently the Council inspects its play areas on a daily basis and you may wish to contact our grounds maintenance contractor for a quote to do this on your behalf. Our contractor can be contacted via andrew.mills@north-herts.gov.uk. We have found that these recorded daily inspections pay dividends in defending insurance claims. If you wish to do the inspections yourself The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) can arrange suitable training. RoSPA can be contacted at enquiries@rospa.com.

Each year you will be required to undertake an independent risk assessment of the play area and send a copy to the Council. The Council will expect you to undertake any remedial work highlighted in the report. If any highlighted work identified as a risk to users is not undertaken, the Council may have no option but to remove the item of equipment; if there are regular failures, the Council will need to consider whether to terminate the lease.

The Council has negotiated a reduced rate with a specialist playground inspection company for these annual inspections and you may wish to take advantage of this service. The current charge is £50.00. If you prefer to make your own arrangements RoSAP will be able to provide a suitable list of companies.

Considerations when taking on a play area

The check list below is not exhaustive but identifies some of things that you will need to consider prior to taking on a play area:

Becoming qualified to undertake play area inspections.	Retaining records of safety inspections.
Routine maintenance of the equipment such as replacement swing seats and chains.	Arranging public liability insurance.
How to respond to public / media enquiries	Training for routine maintenance for example how to safely replace a swing seat.
Who will paint the equipment	Arranging annual risk assessment
What to do if you find hazardous waste such as needles from drug users.	What contact number to have displayed at the play area in case of emergencies or complaints.
How to quickly make safe a dangerous item of play equipment.	How to clean noxious substances from play equipment e.g. dog mess, sick etc.

Further help and information

This may all sound rather daunting but it is important to realise upfront what is involved in managing a play area. This information may help prevent future unexpected surprises.

If you google 'Community Playgrounds' you will see that a number of Councils have adopted a similar approach. You will also be able to contact a number of community groups that already manage play areas.

There are also a number of playground companies that will be able to offer help and guidance especial on funding opportunities for community playgrounds. Below is a brochure from Wicksteed Playgrounds that you may find of use.

If you wish to proceed with taking on the responsibility of your local play area, please contact Steve Geach, Parks & Countryside Development Manager, steve.geach@north-herts.gov.uk, or call 01462 474553.

Attachment	Size
Wicksteed Playgrounds Funding Brochure	1.02 MB

Parks Sponsorship page

Park Sponsorship Scheme

The Parks service of North Hertfordshire District Council runs a sponsorship scheme, designed to offer local businesses the opportunity to advertise in popular destinations around the district.

Roadside bedding displays, play areas, water splash parks and skate/BMX parks in North Hertfordshire are available to sponsor with all proceeds being used to improve the surrounding park areas. You can see an example of a sign [below](#).

Some of the sites on offer include main town gateway locations such as those entering Letchworth Garden City and large floral beds in the Green Flag award winning Priory Memorial Gardens in Royston. Also available to sponsor are the extremely popular and recently improved and well used larger play areas in our towns. Four popular interactive water splash parks including the large water pool at Howard Park in Letchworth are also available to sponsor along with our newly constructed skate park at Norton Common in Letchworth.

For more information please contact the Parks Department on 01462 474000 or by email via services@north.herts.gov.uk to learn more about the scheme and discuss how it could help your business.

Sites available for sponsorship

Site	Size (M2)	Description
Letchworth Garden City		The World's first Garden City
Pixmore Way roundabout flower beds	177m ²	Flora display at main gateway into town centre
Howard Park play area	1950m ²	Play area located adjacent large interactive water splash park attracting many thousands of visitors each year.
Norton Common, skate park	1205m ²	New district wide skate boarding facility.
Baldock		Historic market town
Avenue Park water splash park	390m ²	Interactive water splash park, open May–September each year.
Royston		Historic market town
Priory Memorial gardens, flora displays.	617m ²	Town centre gardens. Displays include herbaceous borders and annual bedding.
Priory Memorial gardens, water splash park	300m ²	Interactive water splash park, open May –September each year.

Hitchin		Historic market town
Bancroft Recreation Ground, water splash park	300m ²	Interactive water splash park, open May –September each year.
Ransoms Recreation Ground, play area	798m ²	Recently refurbished play area including equipment for all ages and multi use games area
Walsworth Common, Play Area	1914m ²	Recently refurbished play area including equipment for all ages and ball games area

Attachment**Size**
[Sponsorship sign example](#)

244.21 KB