

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

DECISION SHEET

Meeting of the Hitchin Committee held in the Christchurch Hitchin
on Tuesday, 12th October, 2021 at 7.30 pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Clare Billing, Judi Billing, Sam Collins and Kay Tart.

2 MINUTES - 2 MARCH 2021, 15 JUNE 2021, 8 JULY 2021

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 2 March 2021, 15 June 2021 and 8 July 2021 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

3 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business notified.

4 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (1) The Chair welcomed those present at the meeting, especially those who had attended to give a presentation;
- (2) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be audio recorded;
- (3) The Chair drew attention to the item on the agenda front pages regarding Declarations of Interest and reminded Members that, in line with the Code of Conduct, any Declarations of Interest needed to be declared immediately prior to the item in question.
- (4) The Chair announced that the Boundary Review Consultation survey was now available to complete and encouraged those present to complete it.

5 HITCHIN BID MANAGER

A verbal presentation was received from the Hitchin BID Manager, Tom Hardy.

6 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - YOUNG PERSON UPDATE

A verbal presentation was given by Chris Kell on the Peace Garden Sculpture.

7 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - PEACE GARDEN SCULPTURE

RESOLVED: That the remaining £2000 allocated to the project be released following the successful raising of funds from public contributions.

8 GRANT APPLICATION - HITCHIN ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

RESOLVED: That grant funding of £800 be awarded to Hitchin Allotment Association for the purchase of a tool store and tools that they can loan out to new allotment tenants as outlined in paragraph 8.1.2 of the officer's report.

9 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A verbal presentation was given by Aletheia Mashiri and Emma Clarke from Getting Rooted C.I.C regarding their grant application.

10 GRANT APPLICATION - GETTING ROOTED C.I.C

RESOLVED: That grant funding of £430 be awarded to Getting Rooted C.I.C. at 'Ron's Plot' Community Allotment Garden for the set up and running of new adult/ teen gardening workshops as outlined in paragraph 8.1.1 of the officer's report.

11 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A verbal presentation was given by Ian Bentley from Hitchin and Letchworth Sea Cadets regarding their grant application.

12 GRANT APPLICATION - HITCHIN AND LETCHWORTH SEA CADETS

RESOLVED: That grant funding of £1,000 be awarded to Letchworth and Hitchin Sea Cadets for IT equipment to aid training for the cadets, camping and boating equipment, education and training events as outlined in paragraph 8.1.3 of the officer's report.

13 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Fiona Jolly gave a verbal presentation outlining discussions that were held with Young People at the Cabinet Panel on Community on 30 September 2021.

14 CHARNWOOD HOUSE UPDATE

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Committee notes the outcome of the community engagement exercise.
- (2) That the Committee endorsed seeking Cabinet's authority to dispose of Charnwood House by way of lease of maximum 99 years, and seeking Cabinet's authority to market the property for leasing by informal tender, subject to Officers first undertaking an options appraisal for running Charnwood as a community hub, to include the option of North Herts Council running Charnwood in house.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

- (1) Noting the outcome of the community engagement exercise supports the Committee's role in coordinating interest in Charnwood House from parties within the public, private and voluntary sectors, in pursuit of repurposing the building to community hub use.
- (2) Approving seeking Cabinet's authority to dispose of and market Charnwood House for leasing will signify support to Officers to pursue these important next steps towards securing Charnwood's future use as a community hub. Undertaking the options appraisal first would determine the full range of choices to successfully deliver a community hub in Hitchin at Charnwood House.

15 SECTION 106 ANNUAL UPDATE

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Members note the content of this report.

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- (2) That Members agree that a report shall continue to be presented on an annual basis to the Area Committee, which sets out full records of all Section 106 activity for the preceding financial year and which reflects changes in legislation and practice.
- (3) That, other than where a contribution has been negotiated for a specific purpose or project, Ward Members of the area where the Section 106 Obligation or Unilateral Undertaking funding is generated and the Area Committee be consulted prior to funding being allocated away from that area. Members must note that the discretionary funds are rapidly diminishing and will not be replaced under current legislation and practice, for reasons that are set out in this report.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS:

- (1) To ensure that there is a robust system for negotiating and managing Section 106 Obligations and Unilateral Undertakings, that records activity for each financial year and is placed in the public domain.
- (2) To ensure that the process is kept under constant review and Member scrutiny and that the risk associated with this activity is managed in an appropriate manner.

16 GRANT APPLICATIONS AND COMMUNITY UPDATE

RESOLVED: That the Committee be recommended to endorse the actions taken by the Community Engagement team to promote greater community capacity and well-being for Hitchin.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

- (1) To ensure the Members are kept informed of the work of the Community Engagement Team.
- (2) This report is intended to inform Members of the financial resources available. It draws attention to the current budgetary situation by assisting in the effective financial management of budgets. 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 January 2020.

17 WARD MATTERS AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS - MEMBERS' REPORTS

Glynn Doggett and Keith Warren, on behalf of Hitchin Festival and The Dell, gave a verbal presentation.

18 POSSIBLE AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

The Chair requested that, should any Members have any suggestions for agenda items for future meetings, they advise himself, officers or the Committee Clerk.

19 INFORMATION NOTE AND GROUP DISCUSSION

RESOLVED: Due to the duration of the meeting, this Information Note would be discussed at the next Hitchin Area Committee.