

**HITCHIN COMMITTEE  
10 MARCH 2020**

**\*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

**TITLE OF REPORT: GRANTS & COMMUNITY UPDATE**

REPORT OF THE POLICY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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

NEW COUNCIL PRIORITY: BUILD THRIVING AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

**1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 To advise the Committee on the current expenditure and balances of the Committee Grant budgets
- 1.2 To bring to the Committee's attention details of recent requests received for 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 Engagement officers have been involved in.
- 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 allocating funding from their discretionary community budget towards the projects below.
- 2.2 **£1,006** to Feed Up Warm Up (FUWU) to assist with the cost of publicity materials and staff uniforms as outlined in 8.1.1.
- 2.3 That **£350** to Climb Hitchin to assist with the cost of training 6 new volunteer climbing wall instructors as outlined in 8.1.2.

- 2.4 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.

### **3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 To ensure the Committee is kept informed of the work of the Community Engagement Team.
- 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 regarding funding proposals for Committee Funds.

### **6. FORWARD PLAN**

- 6.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key Executive decision and has therefore not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

### **7. BACKGROUND**

- 7.1 With reference to the Council's Constitution, Section 9.3 Area Committees will include budgets for the purpose of providing grants and discretionary budgets that may be used within the area of the Committee for economic, social and environmental well-being. Under the current grant criteria there is no upper limit outlined for the amount of grant funding to be allocated which can be decided at the Committee's discretion.

7.2 Members are asked to note the information detailed in Appendix 1. Hitchin Area Committee Budget Spread sheet, which relates to the Area Committee budget balances for 2019/20. The spreadsheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial years, including balances and past expenditure.

## 8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

### 8.1 Grant Applications

#### 8.1.1

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Feed Up Warm Up (FUWU)</b>
<b>Project</b>	The purchase of publicity materials and staff uniforms.
<b>Sum requested</b>	£1006
<b>Total project cost</b>	£1552
<b>Match funding</b>	£546
<b>Annual expenditure</b>	Not available see below.
<b>Funds held</b>	£22,258.50
<b>Previous support</b>	None
<b>NHDC Policy met</b>	Yes

**Current council priority:** Prosper and Protect / Response and Efficient

**New council priority:** Build thriving and resilient communities

Feed Up Warm Up was first set up in November 2018, with the aim of relieving the needs of homeless persons, or those at risk of homelessness, in Hitchin & Stevenage and the surrounding areas by the provision of a weekly drop-in centre in both towns, also street outreach. We provide food, clothing, care and support to vulnerable people, and if required we signpost them to other services.

Annual expenditure:

Due to the charity only becoming registered with the charities commission in November 2019 and with many changes happening in the first year; Feed Up Warm Up are unable to provide a figure which outlines their annual expenditure.

Funds held:

Please note that although FUWU are currently financially secure, there are many amounts of money which are ringfenced as they have been donated for specific projects. For example, the charity has recently purchased two vans; one of which is for outreach and the other is a welfare van. These vans will require finance for general running costs. FUWU also keep a contingency budget in case of a need for emergency accommodation or furniture provision for its clients.

The group are requesting £1,006. Under the current grant criteria members are at liberty to award any amount they wish up to the available budget as outlined in Appendix 1.

### 8.1.2

<b>Applicant Project</b>	<b>Climb Hitchin</b> Providing site specific Indoor Climbing Wall instructor training to 6 volunteers.
<b>Sum requested</b>	£350
<b>Total project cost</b>	£500
<b>Match funding</b>	£150
<b>Annual expenditure</b>	£8259.40 <i>please note this is a forecasted figure for January through to December 2020.</i>
<b>Funds held</b>	£1125.60
<b>Previous support</b>	None
<b>NHDC Policy met</b>	Yes
<b>Current council priority:</b>	Attractive and Thriving/ Prosper and Protect / Response and Efficient
<b>New council priority:</b>	Build thriving and resilient communities

Climb Hitchin was established in April 2019 and is a volunteer led charity group promoting and supporting both indoor and outdoor rock climbing and bouldering for adults aged 18+ in Hitchin and the surrounding areas. They provide instruction so that people can start climbing in a safe manner and begin to access the wonderful range of both indoor and outdoor climbing that the UK has to offer.

The group are requesting £350. Under the guidance to grant applicants they are advised that it is reasonable to apply for amounts between £500 and £1,500 given the level of current funding budgets.

However, under the current grant criteria members are at liberty to award any amount they wish up to the available budget as outlined in Appendix 1.

## 8.2 Community Engagement and update on Previous Grants awarded

### 8.2.1 Policy and Community Engagement Team

The team have been continuing to engage and network with local community groups and initiatives. This involved:

- Offering advice and signposting to assist Westmill Community Centre around their lunch club project and establishing themselves as food collection point.
- Providing advice and support to Feed Up Warm Up with their grant application.
- Supporting groups such as: Hitchin Senior Citizens, Westmill Community Association Committee and Walsworth Festival Committee.

- Facilitating cross-departmental discussions at the Westmill Network Group about a joint up approach to combat ASB on Westmill. Agencies involved were; the Community Centre, YC Herts, Police, NHDC Community Protection, NHDC Community Engagement and NHDC Councillors among others.
- Working in partnership with Planning Policy to create community engagement events in Hitchin Schools and Town Centre location as follow up to the Special Town Centre, Town Talk. In schools, Councillors will facilitate discussions around what students think would make someone visit Hitchin town centre. The town centre will focus on its offerings in areas such as; Transport, The Market, Cultural, Leisure and Retail.
- Chairing various district wide Network Groups such as Youth Action, Food Provision, Homelessness Stakeholders and Green and Growing. These groups provide an opportunity to; share best practise, highlight existing services and streamline processes.
- Organising NHDC Holocaust Memorial Day Service 2020 which took place in Howard Park, Letchworth on Monday 27 January. The service received lots of positive feedback and there were around 40 attendees including members, officers, the public and MP Oliver Heald. A planning meeting will take place in early May to discuss arrangements for 2021.
- Arranging the Chair's Volunteer Achievement Awards which took place as part of the Chair's Civic Reception on Friday 28 February. The evening was a great success – each of the six award winners received a trophy, flowers and a voucher which were presented by Cllr Jean Green.
- Continuing to support members in the provision of monthly Councillors' Surgeries in Hitchin, Letchworth and Royston.

#### 8.2.2 Update on Keech Hospice

NHDC provided Keech with £1,500 grant funding at the October 2019 meeting to support their 24-hour children's advice line. The 24-hour children's advice line underpins our care services by providing children access to specialist advice and support whenever and wherever it is needed. It is available to any family and healthcare professional caring for a child with a life-limiting condition from North Hertfordshire and across our wide catchment areas.

Since the grant awarded by North Hertfordshire District Council in October 2019, Keech have supported 31 children with life-limiting conditions and their relatives from North Hertfordshire. From October to December, families from North Hertfordshire have been supported 27 times through telephone support.

As a charity, Keech rely on the local community and supporters like NHDC for 70% of their funding. While Keech do receive limited statutory funding from the NHS, it is simply not enough to continue their work. NHDC's support has helped Keech to continue providing around the clock access to specialist care where and when it is needed.

### **8.3 Highways Matters**

8.3.1 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.

8.3.2 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 The Area Committees 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. Section 9.8.2 (g) of the 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".

9.2 Chapter 1, s1-8 of the Localism Act 2011 provides a General Power of Competence which gives local authorities the powers to do anything provided that it is not specifically prohibited in legislation.

9.3 Section 137 of the 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 As outlined in Appendix A Committee budget 2019/20.

10.2 The agreed budget for this financial year is £11,000 in line with the 20% reduction in grant budgets as agreed by full council. Carry over amounts from the 2018/19 budgets have been fully utilised.

10.3 Thus far Hitchin committee has provided £9,976 grant funding from 2019/20 budget leaving £1026 to utilise for this meeting – the last of this financial year.

- 10.4 The grant funding applied for in this round adds up to **£1,356**. The committee does not have sufficient funds to award the full amount to both organisations as outlined on the report. Therefore, members are requested to divide the remaining £1,026 between the two applications however they feel is most appropriate while liaising with the applicants.

## **11. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 There are no relevant risk entries that have been recorded on Pentana Risk, 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. Area committee funding is awarded to community groups that clearly demonstrate positive impact on the community and wider environment. The projects outlined in this report seek to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

## **13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS**

- 13.1. The Social Value Act and "go local" requirements 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 1 - 2019/20 financial year budget sheet.

## **16. CONTACT OFFICERS**

16.1 Author: Katie Staddon, Assistant Community Engagement Officer  
Email: [katie.staddon@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:katie.staddon@north-herts.gov.uk) ext.4220

Contributors: Reuben Ayavoo, Policy & Community Engagement Manager  
Email: [reuben.ayavoo@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:reuben.ayavoo@north-herts.gov.uk) ext. 4212

Anne Miller, Assistant Accountant  
Email: [Anne.Miller@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:Anne.Miller@north-herts.gov.uk) ext. 4374

Yvette Roberts, Legal Officer  
Email: [Yvette.roberts@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:Yvette.roberts@north-herts.gov.uk) ext. 4310

Kerry Shorrocks, Corporate Human Resources Manager  
Email: [Kerry.shorrocks@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:Kerry.shorrocks@north-herts.gov.uk) ext. 4224

Tim Everitt, Performance & Risk Officer  
Email: [tim.everitt@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:tim.everitt@north-herts.gov.uk) ext. 4646

## **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.