

**BALDOCK AND DISTRICT COMMITTEE
23 MARCH 2020**

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 officer has 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 agrees that any unspent funds from the 2019/20 financial year be allocated to Community & Environmental Projects for the 2020/21 period.
- 2.2 That the Committee be recommended to endorse the actions taken by the Community Engagement Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being for Baldock.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To ensure the Committee is kept informed of the work of the Community Engagement 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 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 A. Baldock 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 2018/19 financial years, including balances and past expenditure.

7.3 Funding available for the Committee to allocate for the remainder of 2019/20 is summarised below:

	2018/19 Carry Forward	2019/20 Base Budget	Total Budget
Baldock Town	£0	£648	£648
Baldock East	£0	£422	£422
Arbury	£0	£160	£160
Weston & Sandon	£0	£297	£297
			£1,527

8.1 Community Engagement Updates

8.1.1 Baldock Beast Half Marathon

The Baldock Beast Half Marathon was held for a 9th time on Sunday 23rd February 2020 and was supported by around 450 runners who braved the heavy rain and winds. The Baldock Community Engagement Officer (CEO) assisted the Baldock Events Forum (BEF) throughout the planning for this year's event. This included the erecting of advance warning signs around the course and delivery of advance warning flyers to all households along the route.

The Baldock CEO also provided support on the day of the race including checking the course prior to the race, providing marshal support during the race and being the sweep vehicle at the close of the race to remove all race signage.

8.1.2 First Aid Provision at events in Baldock

The Baldock CEO is working with Herts Services Hearts Ltd to co-ordinate the first aid provision for the events in Baldock and also Royston. By using the same supplier, the Baldock CEO is able to secure value for money.

8.1.3 Baldock Festival

The Baldock CEO is supporting the Baldock Festival Committee with plans for this year's event. This has included support with licensing applications and the event management plan. The Baldock CEO will provide support with the parking suspension arrangements for the event and will provide marshal support during the set up and take down of the Baldock Street Festival which will be held on Saturday 23rd May 2020.

8.1.4 Baldock Big Lunch

The Baldock CEO is providing support to the BEF with preparations for this year's Baldock Big Lunch which will be held on Baldock High Street on Sunday 7th June 2020.

8.1.5 Baldock Arts & Heritage Centre

The Baldock CEO is assisting the Baldock Arts & Heritage Centre with their programme of works as part of their full repairing lease arrangements. The Baldock CEO is co-ordinating the release of funds as required to the centre as part of the Phase 2 works.

The Baldock CEO is also assisting the Centre with the promotion of their events via social media, in particular promoting the once monthly cinema club at the venue.

8.1.6 Ashwell Pavilion Project

The Baldock CEO is assisting Ashwell Parish Council with their new pavilion project. The Baldock CEO has met with the group and has signposted them to Barkway Parish Council who carried out a similar project in 2015.

Ashwell Parish Council will be meeting with Barkway Parish Council during March /April to take advice on how to move the project forward and how to source funding.

The Baldock CEO is helping Ashwell Parish Council to identify funding streams for the project including S106 funds, Awards for All and Sport England.

8.1.7 Baldock Royal British Legion

The Baldock Royal British Legion is seeking funding support to help towards the cost of bunting for their VJ event in Baldock High Street on Friday 8th May. As the group received funding from the Baldock & District Committee in September 2018 it is not eligible for funding from the Committee (under the current policy) until September 2020.

The Baldock CEO has been able to source funding of £150 for the project and this will be released to the group on completion of the required paperwork.

8.1.8 Baldock Seniors Minibus

Members will recall that funding was allocated for a new Baldock Seniors Minibus from the Committee's base budget in the 2016/17 financial year. The funding of £6,600 has now been released and the new minibus will be purchased in the next couple of months.

8.1.9 Developer Contributions / s106 & other Capital Funding projects

The Baldock Community Engagement Officer has been worked with external groups and colleagues in the Planning Department in the potential utilisation developer contributions and other sources of capital funding available.

Baldock Community Centre

- The Management Committee at the Community Centre is seeking to refurbish the foyer and toilet area. The Baldock CEO is assisting the project team in securing appropriate funding for the scheme as well as procuring project plans & specification costings in order for the works to be tendered out. The centre has completed an application to the Community Facilities Capital Projects Funding Scheme and this will be considered by the Panel on 25th March 2020.

Baldock Methodist Church

- The Baldock CEO has supported the Baldock Methodist Church with their application to the Community Facilities Capital Projects Funding Scheme for works to enhance the toilet and kitchen facilities at the venue. The group has now completed its application and their project will be tabled at the next panel of the Community Facilities Capital Projects Funding Scheme on 25th March.

If members have any projects in mind which may potentially benefit from utilising capital funds derived via the Planning process please contact the Communities Officer to investigate further possibilities.

The Community Engagement Team is also collating a database of future requirements in terms of community need across the District in preparation & response to potential developments arising from the Local Plan.

Such perceived need will be communicated to planning officers to assist when negotiating any potential planning obligations with prospective developers. Similarly, if members have any suggestions of suitable projects or possible future requirements within their wards please inform the Community Engagement Officer.

8.2 Highways Matters

8.2.1 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.

8.2.2 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 and bullet point 7.3 above.

10.2 The Committee has £1,527 left to allocate at the March 2020 meeting.

10.3 The Committee will need to allocate any unspent funds to Community & Environmental Projects for the 2020/21 financial year.

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 A - 2019/20 financial year budget sheet.

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.