BALDOCK COMMITTEE
22 JUNE 2020

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

TITLE OF REPORT: GRANTS AND COMMUNITY UPDATE

REPORT OF THE POLICY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

COUNCIL OBJECTIVES: BE A MORE WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE COUNCIL / BUILD THRIVING AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES / RESPOND TO CHALLENGES TO THE ENVIRONMENT / ENABLE AN ENTERPRISING AND CO-OPERATIVE ECONOMY

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 be recommended to consider allocating funding from their discretionary community budget towards the project below.

2.2 **£1000** to the Independent Baldock Beer Festival to assist with the cost of purchasing a storage unit for storing equipment at Brandles School as outlined in 8.1.1.

2.3 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 January 2020.

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 Council 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. Baldock Area Committee Budget Spread sheet, which relates to the Area Committee budget balances for 2020/21. The spreadsheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial year, including balances and past expenditure.

7.3 Funding available for the Committee to allocate during 2020/21 is summarised below:

	2019/20 Carry Forward	2020/21 Base Budget	Total Budget
Baldock Town	£648	£2,400	£3,048
Baldock East	£422	£1,000	£1,422
Arbury	£160	£900	£1,060
Weston & Sandon	£297	£700	£997
	£1,527	£5,000	£6,527

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 Grant Applications

8.1.1

Applicant	**Independent Baldock Beer Festival**
Project	Purchase of a storage container for storing equipment at Brandles School in Baldock
Sum requested	£1,000
Total project cost	£3,500
Match funding	£2,500
Previous support	None
NHDC Policy met	Yes
Council objective:	Build thriving and resilient communities

The Independent Baldock Beer Festival is held annually at Brandles school and is the opening event of the 2-week Baldock Festival which has been operating for over 35 years. The Independent Baldock Beer Festival has for many years stored their equipment in a cupboard at the school but due to increased numbers at the school the cupboard is now required for school equipment. The Independent Baldock Beer Festival is therefore seeking funding support from the Baldock & District Committee to assist with the purchase of a storage container which will be located on the Brandles School site. The school has applied for planning permission for the storage container.

The Independent Baldock Beer Festival has been operating since 2007 and has been a registered charity since 2017. The Committee is made up of 11 volunteers and supported by around 100 volunteers during the event. During the last 10 years the Independent Baldock Beer Festival has raised over £75k for local charities and good causes. As well as being a popular community event, the Beer Festival is also used as a fundraising exercise by local Scout groups and youth groups. The group is self-sufficient, and this is the first time they have come to the Baldock & District Committee for financial support. This measure has been necessary as the group had to cancel the 2020 Beer Festival due to the Covid-19 Pandemic and therefore was unable to generate any income. The group is putting in £2.5k match funding.

The group are requesting £1,000. 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 Updates

8.2.1 Coronavirus Pandemic

Impact on Events

Over the years, Baldock has built up an impressive programme of events for the.residents of the town and surrounding villages. These include sporting events, (Baldock Beast Half Marathon, Baldock 5km Rat Run & Baldock Cycle Challenge), music events, (Balstock Music Festival) and community/family events (Baldock Festival, Baldock Big Lunch, Baldock Chartered Street Fair & Baldock Christmas Fayre).

As well as bringing the community together these events also help drive footfall for the local businesses and help to raise money for local good causes /charities.

Sadly, due to the Coronavirus Pandemic a number of these events have been cancelled. The two week Baldock Festival due for May was the first casualty, followed by the Big Lunch which was due to be held on Sunday 7th June.

The Baldock Cycle Challenge which was due to be held for the 9th time on Sunday 12th July has now been postponed until September. (Provisional date now Sunday 20th September).

Due to the uncertainty over when the Pandemic will be over, it is not possible to confirm whether the Autumn events for the town will go ahead. The Baldock Community Engagement Officer (CEO) will continue to liaise with all event co-ordinators and will advise both the Committee and the North Herts Safety Advisory Group when decisions are made. Events in the balance for the remainder of the year are Balstock (11th – 13th September), Baldock Rat Run 5km (13th September), Baldock Chartered Street Fair (2nd - 4th October), Baldock Community Fireworks (8th November) and Baldock Christmas Fayre (5th December).

The Baldock CEO is in constant communication with the organisers of the Baldock Chartered Street Fair with regards to this year's event. The Baldock CEO has reminded the organisers that to maintain the charter there must be a presence in the town during the 3 day fair period. There has only been one occasion in the history of the Chartered Fair that the organisers have not been able to bring the complete fairground to Baldock and this was during the 2nd World War. During this time only a coconut stall operated. The Baldock CEO is assisting with the Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) Paperwork for the event and will assist with the Event Plan paperwork that is required by the North Herts Safety Advisory Group.

Impact on Community Buildings

The Coronavirus Pandemic has forced the temporary closure of the towns two main community hubs namely the Baldock Community Centre and the Baldock Arts & Heritage Centre.

The Baldock CEO has supported both venues by signposting them to grants available. Both venues received £10k from the NHDC Business Grant.

The Baldock CEO is liaising with the Baldock Arts & Heritage Centre over Phase 2 works at the building and will release funds on completion of works.

Support Groups in response to Coronavirus.

The Baldock CEO has been supporting the numerous support groups that have been set up in response to the Pandemic. The Baldock CEO keeps in regular contact with the Baldock, Ashwell and Hinxworth support groups and has provided support with the distribution of publicity material and signposting of key information via social media.

The Baldock CEO has also assisted with Operation Shield, contacting those identified in the county as most vulnerable and providing advice over the phone.

8.2.2 Community Facilities Capital Projects Fund

Following the meeting of the Community Facilities Capital Projects Panel in March, the Baldock CEO has been liaising with representatives from Baldock Methodist Church and Baldock Community Centre to obtain answers to queries raised. The Panel is now satisfied with both applications and funding will be released in the coming weeks.

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 December 2019. Section 9.8.2 (h) 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 1 Committee budget 2020/21.

10.2 The agreed base budget for this financial year is £5,000.This has been maintained at the same level as 19/20, following full council's agreement to reverse the planned efficiencies. Carry over amounts from the 2019/2020 budgets is £1,527, giving a total budget of £6,527.

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. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

14.1. There are no known Environmental impacts or requirements that apply to this report.

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

15.1 There are no pertinent Human Resource implications associated with any items within this report.

16. APPENDICES

16.1 Appendix 1 - 2020/21 financial year budget sheet.

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18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

18. 2 Review of Grant Policy Cabinet February 2020.