

**HITCHIN COMMITTEE
30 JUNE 2020**

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

TITLE OF REPORT: GRANTS & COMMUNITY UPDATE

REPORT OF THE POLICY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: 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 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 **£1925** to Phase (Providing Help and Support in Education) to assist with the cost of providing mentoring sessions for young people as outlined in 8.1.1.
- 2.3 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 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. Hitchin 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 years, including balances and past expenditure.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 Grant Applications

8.1.1

Applicant Project	Phase (Providing Help and Support in Education) Providing six 30-minute mentoring sessions for 34 young people.
Sum requested	£1925
Total project cost	£3570
Match funding	£1645
Previous support	£1500 in 2015 towards support groups for young people at risk of self-harm.
NHDC Policy met	Yes
Council objective:	Build thriving and resilient communities

Phase was established in 2002 and is a registered charity which aims to support the development of wellbeing in young people aged 5-18. Phase prides itself on being there for young people, to provide support, encouragement and to equip them for life.

The three key aims of Phase are:

- Promote wellbeing for all young people.
- Prevent young people from developing issues.
- Support those young people experiencing a mental health difficulty.

This grant application is to enable Phase to provide six 30-minute virtual mentoring sessions to 34 secondary school age children across Hitchin. Those in receipt of mentoring may be suffering from social isolation, increased mental health struggles, loneliness, anxiety and other issues as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The group are requesting £1925. 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:

- Supporting various district wide Network Groups such as Youth Action, Food Provision, Homelessness Stakeholders and Green and Growing.
- Attending virtual Zoom meetings with Hitchin Food Provision Team to facilitate collaborative working between Food Banks/Hitchin Partnership/Feed Up Warm Up (FUWU).

- Advising on grant applications from Hitchin Food Provision Team, Phase Hitchin, Need Project, North Herts Talking Newspaper, Home-Start Hertfordshire, Open Art Box CIC, Hitchin BID Pride Event and Hitchin Food Rescue Hub.
- Continually staffing the Healthy Hub line and answering calls on varying topics such as food provision, financial support, business grants, nursery provision for key workers children etc.
- Creating an Excel database of current food providers and COVID-19 Mutual Aid groups across the district of North Herts.
- Continually sharing information on social media such as COVID-19 Mutual Aid groups, Healthy Hub info, CVS bulletins and food bank updates.
- Liaising with Settle regarding COVID-19 scenario and responses document.
- Sharing external funding sources with Councillors, Community Centres, Hospices, Food Providers, Churches, Charities and many more community contacts.
- Liaising with food providers on the Westmill Estate in Hitchin to ensure a coordinated approach.
- Discussing potential community venues in Hitchin with the commercial team.
- Sharing details of Hitchin Youth Trust's Family Support Grants with all attendees of our North Herts Youth Action Network Group.
- Initiating discussions about Holocaust Memorial Day and the High Sheriff's visit 2021 and what format we would like these to take.
- Assisting with promotion materials for the COVID-19 Community Support Fund.
- Discussing COVID-19 related funding agreements with Hitchin Food Rescue Hub and Hitchin Food Provision Team.
- Helping with the running of Hitchin's first virtual Councillors' Surgery via Zoom.

8.2.2 Update on 8th Oughton Scout Group

NHDC provided 8th Oughton Scout Group with £712 grant funding at the June 2019 meeting to support their litter picking projects and leisure activities.

Since receiving the funding, the group have purchased 25 litter pickers and 8 bag holders as well as 10 foam balls of varying sizes. The remaining funding will be spent on gardening gloves for juniors.

The Scouts had planned to take part in Hitchin's litter pick in March which was cancelled due to COVID-19. Scouts confirmed that litter picking will be a key activity when they can get out and about again later in the year and they will promote the kit to other groups.

Erica Lang sent some photos from litter picking that the Scouts did on the Westmill Estate in Autumn and of some more recent activities during lockdown. Erica explained that the Scout Leaders are using Zoom so that the group can continue to meet, and the children are enjoying this opportunity.

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 January 2020. 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 A Committee budget 2020/21.

10.2 There was no carry forward budget from 2019/20 and the base budget for the 2020/21 financial year remains at £11,000.

10.3 Thus far Hitchin committee has provided **£2,640** grant funding from the 2020/21 budget leaving **£8,360** to utilise for the remainder of the financial year.

10.4 The grant funding applied for in this round is **£1,925**. If Councillors agreed this grant, there would be **£6,435** remaining of the Hitchin Committee budget.

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. For example, young people in particular will be the targeted beneficiaries of opportunity as per the application outlined in 8.1.1.

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.

17. CONTACT OFFICERS

17.1 Author: Katie Staddon, Assistant Community Engagement Officer
Email: katie.staddon@north-herts.gov.uk ext.4220

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

Anne Miller, Assistant Accountant
Email: Anne.Miller@north-herts.gov.uk ext. 4374

Yvette Roberts, Legal Officer
Email: Yvette.roberts@north-herts.gov.uk ext. 4310

Kerry Shorrocks, Corporate Human Resources Manager
Email: Kerry.shorrocks@north-herts.gov.uk ext. 4224

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

Georgina Chapman, Trainee Policy Officer
Email: georgina.chapman@north-herts.gov.uk ext. 4121

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 January 2020.