

**HITCHIN COMMITTEE
29 SEPTEMBER 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 **£900** to Hitchin Fun Club to assist with the cost of art, sport and cleaning equipment as outlined in 8.1.1.
- 2.3 **£1000** to Strathmore Fun Club to assist with the cost of new outdoor and sports equipment as outlined in 8.1.2.

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| <p>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.</p> |
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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	Hitchin Fun Club (HFC)
Project	New art / sport equipment and cleaning supplies.
Sum requested	£900
Total project cost	£1100
Match funding	£200
Previous support	£650 in 2006 for booster seats. £1500 in 2019 to assist with the cost of venue hire at Highbury Infant School.
NHDC Policy met	Yes
Council objective:	Build thriving and resilient communities

Hitchin Fun Club was established in 1989. It is an after school/ holiday club childcare facility based at Highbury Infant School. The club provides a safe, caring environment for children to play, explore, learn and engage in many different activities. The club is for ages 4-12 years. HFC operates as a committee run, not for profit organisation.

Local children and families benefit from Hitchin Fun Club. The club is run purely for the benefit of the children and fees are kept low to make the club accessible for all working parents. Hitchin Fun Club have 35 child places available each day. Traditionally, Hitchin Fun Club takes in children from Whitehill and Highbury Schools although places can be available to all families in the North Herts area.

The funding will be used to purchase additional equipment required and cover the cost of a programme of events and activities which we are designed to keep the children engaged, fit, healthy and happy whilst attending Holiday club.

In line with Government guidelines around the 2020 Coronavirus outbreak, protective measures will still be in place throughout the year. As a result, HFC will need to invest in additional cleaning products such as hand gels, sanitisers and tissues required to practice good hygiene. HFC will also purchase gloves and face masks. This grant will help towards the cost of all these additional outgoings.

The club are requesting £900. 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

Applicant	Strathmore Fun Club (SFC)
Project	The purchase of new outdoor and sports equipment
Sum requested	£1000
Total project cost	£1150
Match funding	£150
Previous support	None
NHDC Policy met	Yes
Council objective:	Build thriving and resilient communities

Strathmore Fun Club was established in January 1998. It is an after school childcare facility based at Strathmore School open until 6.30pm. The club provides a safe, caring environment for children to play, explore, learn and engage in many different activities. The club is for children aged between 4 and 12 years.

Strathmore Fun Club normally takes in children from Strathmore, Samuel Lucas, Our Lady's and Wilshire Dacre Schools but is open for all families in the North Herts Area. The club has 30 spaces available each day. As a not for profit organisation, the club runs purely for the benefit of the children and fees are kept low to make the club accessible for all working parents.

The grant requested would help cover the cost of purchasing new outdoor and sports equipment. The club's current outdoor equipment is old and worn. The funding will be used to purchase additional outdoor equipment to help keep the children engaged, fit, healthy and happy whilst attending After School Club.

Staff try to ensure that the children get outside every day (weather permitting) as it is important to their health and well-being. The club run a programme of outdoor sporting events and games during the week which are always well received by the children.

In line with Government guidelines around the 2020 Coronavirus outbreak, protective measures will still be in place throughout the year. As a result, SFC will need to invest in additional cleaning and protective products. This grant will help towards the cost of all these increased outgoings.

The funding requested will enable Strathmore Fun Club to continue to run successfully for many more years to come. Ensuring continued work for local staff members and providing quality, low cost care for local children.

The club are requesting £1000. 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 UPDATE

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 local and district wide Network Groups such as Youth Action, Food Provision and Westmill.
- Providing advice to Walsworth and Westmill Community centres.
- Continuing discussions about Holocaust Memorial Day.
- Creating a document of summer activities for young people.
- Partaking in discussions with YC Herts about success of youth projects on Westmill.
- Facilitating virtual Councillors' Surgeries via Zoom.
- Liaising with Community Grant applicants including: Growing Resilience in Teens, Built on Faith Church and Open Art Box CIC.
- Organising Community Support Fund panels and liaising with applicants.
- Reviewing grant applications and providing advice on Black History Month Events.

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 **£4,565** grant funding from the 2020/21 budget leaving **£6,435** to utilise for the remainder of the financial year.
- 10.4 The grant funding applied for in this round adds up to **£1,900**. If Councillors agreed these grants, there would be **£4,535** 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.

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

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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 January 2020.