

**ROYSTON COMMITTEE
17 MARCH 2021**

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

TITLE OF REPORT: GRANTS & COMMUNITY UPDATE

REPORT OF THE POLICY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

COUNCIL OBJECTIVES: 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 advise the Committee of the activities and schemes with which the Community Engagement officer has been involved in.
- 1.3** 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 endorse the actions taken by the Community Engagement Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being for Royston.
- 2.2** That the Committee agrees to the carry forward of £1,500 from the current budget to the 2021/22 financial year to continue to support the Free After 3pm Parking Initiative in Royston.
- 2.3** That the Committee agrees that any unspent funds from the 2020/21 financial year be allocated to Community & Environmental Projects for 2021/22.

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 With reference to the Free After 3pm Initiative as detailed in 2.2, funding support is necessary from the Royston & District Committee on an annual basis to ensure the project can continue for the benefit of residents and businesses of Royston. The support of Hertfordshire County Councillors via their Locality Budget and Royston First is also crucial in securing the future of this initiative for Royston.
- 3.4 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 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. Royston 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 Remaining
Royston	£0	£2,645	£2,645

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 Grants in the Pipeline

The Royston Community Engagement Officer (CEO) has been working with several groups / organisations who are seeking funding support from the Royston & District Committee. Due to a number of factors these applications were not in a position to be tabled at the March meeting so have been deferred until a future meeting. Details of the applications are included in the table below:

Group	Project	Funding Requested
Royston Town Youth Football Club	The group is looking for funding support to replace the pitch dividing nets at the Astro pitch facility that they use at King James Academy.	The group is looking for £1695.
Coombes Community Association	The Coombes Community Association is seeking funding support to assist with the purchase of new chairs for the centre, to replace old ones which no longer meet safety standards.	The group is looking for £1200

8.2 Community Engagement Updates

8.2.1 Free After 3pm Parking Initiative in Royston

As detailed in bullet point 2.2 and 3.3 above, the Committee is requested to allocate and carry forward for spending in the 2021/22 financial year, £1,500 to assist with the costs for operating the Free After 3pm Parking Initiative in Royston. With the Committee's agreement the funding will be released to the relevant service area at NHDC in April 2021. As well as the contribution from Royston & District Committee, the support from the two Hertfordshire County Councillor's Locality Budgets and Royston First is crucial in maintaining this project for Royston.

In 2020, the Royston & District Committee along with Hertfordshire County Council and Royston First received a refund or discounted rate on the initiative due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. The Royston CEO will liaise with relevant parties on a refund or discount if the Pandemic continues to affect the service during 2021.

8.2.2 Delivery of Hand Sanitiser to local community groups

During January 2021, the Royston CEO repeated the task of October 2020, delivering hand sanitiser to local groups and venues on behalf of North Herts CVS. Beneficiaries of the free hand sanitiser included Coombes Community Centre, Royston Royal British Legion and Royston Day Centre.

8.2.3 Delivery of Covid-19 Social Distancing Signage to Royston and Village Locations

The Royston CEO was contacted by Reed Parish Council for support with Covid-19 Social distancing signage for use in their recreational areas. The Royston CEO was able to secure signage from Hertfordshire County Council. As well as securing signage for Reed, the Royston CEO also provided and delivered signage for Barkway Parish Council, Royston BMX, Royston Royal British Legion and Coombes Community Centre. Signage is still available if Members are aware of other venues that may require support.

8.2.4 Community Salt Bins in Royston

During January 2021, in preparation for the cold weather spell, the Royston CEO replenished the salt in the Community Salt bins around Royston. This was necessary on two separate occasions due to increased usage of salt during the Winter period.

8.2.5 Chair's Volunteer Achievement Awards 2021

The Royston CEO assisted the Community Engagement Team with the collection and processing of nominations for the Chair's Volunteer Achievement Awards. The Royston CEO also organised the glass trophies for the 5 winners. At the time of writing this report it is not possible to release the names of the winners, but I can disclose that 2 of the winners represent groups from Royston.

8.2.3 Funding Support for The Diary Newsletter Committee

The Royston CEO was approached by The Diary Newsletter Committee who were seeking funding support to ensure the continuity of the publication. The Diary is a monthly newsletter that is delivered to around 670 households in Barkway, Barley, Reed and Nuthampstead, Newsells, Buckland and Chipping. Due to the current Pandemic the Committee had seen a dramatic drop in income from business advertisements and needed £1500 to ensure the publication could be produced in February, March and April. With support from County and District Councillors the Royston CEO was able to secure the necessary funding through a successful Herts County Council Health Grant application as well as funding contributions from Barkway, Barley & Reed Parish Council and East Herts Council.

8.2.4 Support for Businesses during the Covid-19 Pandemic

The Royston CEO continues to signpost local businesses and community groups to business support grants that are available to them during the Pandemic. This has included funding support available during the tier 3 period as well as the current national lockdown. At the time of writing this report I can confirm that both Coombes Community Centre and Royston Royal British Legion have received the business support funds that are currently available.

8.2.5 Bus Shelters

There is currently no update available on when the bus shelter agreed for Ickniel Walk will be installed. The purchase order for this shelter was raised by Royston Town Council back in January 2020 but has been constantly delayed due to the current Pandemic and Brexit which has impacted on stock levels and deliveries.

The Royston CEO will continue to work with the Town Council and the contractors Clear Channel on this project.

As part of the original purchase order, funding was agreed for the installation of a shelter on Melbourn Road. When it became apparent that this shelter was going to be funded as a direct result of a recent housing development, the funding was redirected to providing a bus shelter on Melbourn Street.

During January 2021 a site visit was arranged to look at possible locations for a bus shelter on Melbourn Street. Following the site visit a scan was undertaken to ensure that no services would be disrupted by the installation.

The scan revealed no issues and the Royston CEO is working with the Council's Transport Officer to allocate the funding from S106 Sustainable Transport. The purchase order for the works will be raised by Royston Town Council.

8.2.6 Bicycle Racks

The Royston CEO continues to work with the NHDC Transport Officer and colleagues at Royston Town Council on the installation of a shelter with bike racks on Market Hill carpark.

Since the December meeting there have been several site visits with potential contractors. At the time of writing this report a contractor has not yet been appointed.

The Royston CEO is also awaiting confirmation from Highways that there are no sight line issues with the shelter's location.

Funding has been allocated from North Herts District Council's S106 Sustainable Transport pot for the project and it is hoped that the shelter will be installed before the Summer months.

8.2.7 Potential new band stand for Priory Memorial Gardens

The Royston CEO is working with Royston Town Council on a project to install a new band stand on Priory Memorial Gardens. This project is still in the early stages but discussions have taken place between Royston Town Council and North Herts District Council's Ground Maintenance team.

Funding for the project has been agreed in principle from the S106 Community Facilities pot. £200k is available under S106 Community Facilities from the housing development at Hedera Gardens.

Priory Memorial Gardens is used for a number of community events annually including Royston May Fayre, Royston Historical Pageant, Royston Festival and Street Food Heroes. The building of a new band stand will help to increase the usage of the park for community events in the future.

8.2.8 Additional Outside Classroom at Therfield First School

The Royston CEO has been liaising with the Headteacher at the school as well as officers at NHDC Planning & Conservation and Hertfordshire County Council. The Royston CEO was able to identify £10k within Hertfordshire County Council's S106 Education funding which could be utilised for the project.

The Herts County Council S106 Education funding was released in November.

The building work is now complete and the new classroom is being well used for small group lessons.

8.2.9 Trinity Life Church Community Facility Project

The Royston CEO has had initial discussions with Cate Hall from Trinity Life Church regarding a potential Community Facilities Capital Projects Funding Stream application. The Church has recently purchased The Old School House in Market Hill and are looking at a refurbishment project to create a new community hub for the town which can be used for the Make Lunch Project as well as numerous other community groups. The Royston CEO will assist the group with the application form and will provide support with regards to other sources of funding.

A site meeting was set up in January 2021 between the Royston CEO, Trinity Life Church and local contractors to look at the scale of the project.

The Royston CEO has advised the group to adopt a phased approach to the project and to look at utilising Community Facilities Capital Projects funding for Phase 1 which will be enhancements to the main hall of the building.

8.2.10 Developer Contributions / s106 & other Capital Funding projects

The Royston CEO has worked with external groups and colleagues in the Planning Department in the potential utilisation developer contributions and other sources of capital funding available. Under s106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended, contributions/obligations can be sought from developers towards the costs of providing community and social infrastructure, the need for which has arisen as a result of a new development taking place. This funding is commonly known as 'Section 106'.

Projects Completed:

- Fencing project at side of Coombes Community Centre to address anti-social behaviour
- Fencing project at Royston BMX to address anti-social behaviour

Projects in process:

- Enhancement of sporting facilities at Royston Heath with the Conservators.
- The possibility of seeking a new venue for Royston Scouts currently based at Roysia School.
- Enhanced provision of Bus Shelters at potential sites within the town
- Provision of cycle racks around Royston Town Centre.
- Youth / Spectator Shelter to address anti-social behaviour around Coombes Area
- Resurfacing and lighting project on Public Right of Way Land linking Ivy Farm with Green Drift. (this project is still on the work programme for 2020/21 but may be delayed due to the Covid-19 Pandemic)
- A505 Cycle Path project
- Access and Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) improvements to Royston Town Hall
- All weather Hockey pitch for Royston
- Barkway PC re the installation & disabled access to the Recreation Ground & Pavilion
- Kitchen and toilet improvements in the main hall of Royston Town Hall.

If members have any projects in mind which may potentially benefit from utilising capital funds derived via the Planning process, please contact the Community Engagement 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 new planning obligation 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.

8.3 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 Sections 9.8.1 (a) and 9.8.1 (b) of the Council's Constitution in respect of the Area Committees' Terms of Reference, notes the following:- To allocate discretionary budgets within the terms determined by the Council and to allocate devolved budgets and activities within the terms determined by the Council. This is 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 notes 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 if 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 £6,000. This has been maintained at the same level as 19/20, following full council's agreement to reverse the planned efficiencies. Funding left to allocate is £2,645.

10.3 Members are asked to note that if the £1500 is allocated from the base budget for the Free After 3pm Parking Initiative, the Committee will have £1,145 budget remaining to carry forward to the 2021/22 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. 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 January 2020.