

## HITCHIN COMMITTEE 28<sup>th</sup> June 2022

### \*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

**TITLE OF REPORT:** GRANTS & COMMUNITY UPDATE

**REPORT OF:** THE POLICY & COMMUNITIES MANAGER

**EXECUTIVE MEMBER:** COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

**CURRENT COUNCIL PRIORITIES:** PEOPLE FIRST, SUSTAINABILITY, A BRIGHTER FUTURE TOGETHER

#### **1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 To advise the Members on the current expenditure and balances of the Committee Grant budgets.
- 1.2 To bring to the Members' attention recent requests received for Committee grant funding, made by community groups and local organisations.
- 1.3 To advise of the activities and schemes with which the Community Engagement officers have been involved in.
- 1.4 To bring to the Members' attention some important community-based activities that will take place during the next few months.

#### **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That the Committee considers allocating funding from their discretionary community budget towards the projects below:
- 2.2 **£1,035** to Back2Schoolival CIC towards a project that will support the creation of volunteering/work experiences for local students in the North Hertfordshire area as outlined in paragraph 8.1.1 of the officer's report.
- 2.3 **£1,100** to Hitchin Fun Club towards funding to help cover the cost of their annual Holiday Clubs as outlined in 8.1.2 of the officer's report.
- 2.4 **£1,000** to The Creative Mental Health Charity PoetsIN towards delivering ten of their One Hour Wellbeing Workshops to Hitchin-based schools as outlined in 8.1.3 of the officer's report.
- 2.5 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 Members are kept informed of the work of the Community Engagement Team.
- 3.2 This report is intended to inform Members of the financial resources available. It draws attention to the current budgetary situation by assisting in the effective financial management of budgets. 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. Delay decisions until the Committee meets in person, which is not considered the best option as many community organisations rely on such grants.

### **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.
- 7.2 Members are asked to note the information detailed in Appendix 1. Hitchin Area Committee Budget spreadsheet, which relates to the Area Committee budget balances for 2022/23. The spreadsheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial years, including balances and past expenditure.

### **8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS**

Councillors are at liberty to consider any amount requested in a grant application as long as the Hitchin Area Committee has sufficient funds in the 2022/2023 budget.

## 8.1 Grant Applications

### 8.1.1

<b>Applicant Project</b>	<b>Back2Schoolival CIC</b> This project will support the creation of volunteering / work experiences for local students in the North Hertfordshire area.
<b>Sum requested</b>	£1,035
<b>Total project cost</b>	£1,035
<b>Previous support</b>	No
<b>NHDC Policy met</b>	Yes
<b>Council objectives</b>	People First

- 8.1.2 This project will support the creation of volunteering/work experiences for local students in the North Hertfordshire area. Back2Schoolival CIC will use their annual rugby and netball festival as the focal point for these opportunities with the students to be present on the day (Friday 12th and Saturday 13th August).
- 8.1.3 They will work with professionals in fields such as journalism, photography and videography who will arrange pre-event workshops for students interested in their discipline. As an example, the event photographer would run a workshop in June where the focus would be on preparing the students for the event in August. The workshop would focus on pre-event preparation and planning and how to utilise the skills and techniques the students would have picked up in class. The workshop would then focus on how to operate as a freelance photographer, how they have set themselves up and how they approach the event with the client in mind.
- 8.1.4 At the event itself, the professional would then shadow students, talking through how they operate on the day and how they make sure they get all the content they require. The students would then have plenty of time to go around the event on their own, putting everything they have learned into practise. Finally, after the event the photographer would then run another workshop for the students to discuss how to manage the editing process and how to prepare everything to present it to the client.
- 8.1.5 The workshops would be open to any 16-21 year olds to attend, ensuring any students can access the learnings and benefit from the professional advice. Opportunities on the day would then be split into a rota basis to ensure as many students can attend on the day.
- 8.1.6 This project is targeted at 16–21-year-olds in the North Hertfordshire district. The opportunities will be aimed at students who are studying in fields such as English (journalism) or the arts (photography or videography) to build on what they have learned in school and to give them the chance to transfer these skills into a real-life setting. The opportunities will be open for any 16–21-year-olds in the area even if photography is just a passion but current students are the target.

- 8.1.7 There will be 90 spaces for North Hertfordshire-based 16–21-year-olds on the three workshops. There will then be 25 opportunities for the students to attend the event itself. The workshop dates are not yet confirmed but will include a pre-event workshop (before Friday 12th August), a post event (after Sunday 14th August) and on the day support at the event (12th and 13th August).
- 8.1.8 Back2Schoolival CIC have established links with the local schools and colleges to communicate the opportunities directly to the students. They have a social media presence so will also utilise this communication stream as well as leaning on relationships they have with local sports clubs for example, who can share the information with their younger players.
- 8.1.9 For many young people, the opportunity of working for yourself and operating on a freelance basis is now a realistic career path. Especially in fields such as professional sports photography, there are now many more opportunities and increasing opportunities for women. Thriving and resilient communities need a diversity in job opportunities and an ability for young people to feel supported and confident in starting out on their own.
- 8.1.10 This ties in with creating an enterprising and co-operative community. Giving local, North Hertfordshire-based students opportunities like this will instil confidence in creating enterprising opportunities such as freelance operations. Through a project like this where a non-profit such as Back2Schoolival CIC puts on opportunities like this for free, they hope that students will be enthused to continue to work cooperatively and appreciate the strength of community.

8.1.11

<b>Applicant Project</b>	<b>Hitchin Fun Club</b>
<b>Sum requested</b>	Funding to help cover the cost of their annual Holiday Clubs.
<b>Total project cost</b>	£1,100
<b>Match funding</b>	£1,300
<b>Previous support</b>	£200 generated by new membership fees and income from club.
<b>NHDC Policy met</b>	No
<b>Council objectives</b>	Yes
	People First

8.1.12 Hitchin Fun Club would like funding to help cover the cost of their annual Holiday Clubs. The funding will be used to purchase additional equipment and supplies required and cover the cost of a programme of events and activities which they have designed to keep the children engaged, fit, healthy and happy whilst attending Holiday club. This service provides essential childcare for local families. They would like to arrange for a couple of trips or visits as an extra treat for the children during the Summer holiday club.

- 8.1.13 Equipment to be purchased would include scooters, trikes and hard helmets. New sports equipment including bats, balls and mats. New outdoor play equipment including water play table, pop up tents and bubble machines. Art and craft materials, party supplies and games. Additional food items will need to be purchased for food tasting, fruit fun days and baking/cooking sessions. Small prizes and rewards will be purchased also for team games and end of term parties. In line with Government guidelines protective measures will still be in place throughout the year and as a result they also need to invest in the additional cleaning products such as hand gels, sanitisers and tissues required to practice good hygiene.
- 8.1.14 Local children and families benefit from Hitchin Fun Club. As a not-for-profit club they are 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. Hitchin Fun Club Holiday Club is available to all families in the North Hertfordshire area and is based within a setting at Highbury Infant School, Hitchin. It is open during the term-time of Highbury School (excluding Bank Holidays) and open from schools' finishing times to 6pm.
- 8.1.15 Emails and booking forms have already been sent out to existing parents who have first refusal on access to Summer holiday club places. The after school and holiday clubs are advertised within the school grounds. Details are also available on their new, updated website, which includes all information regarding the club, prices, upcoming events and payments. The website also provides access to online registration and waiting list forms.
- 8.1.16 Hitchin Fun Club staff are well trained and have been employed at the club for several years so there is a stable team which helps the children to feel safe and secure. It is vitally important that the children feel safe and secure in an environment which is both welcoming and fun.
- 8.1.17 Their school holiday club project meets the Council's objectives by providing an extra level of childcare to the local community of Hitchin. It is fully supported by both their current after school club parents and many local families who need holiday club facilities. Repeat bookings are high and the club is well attended throughout the year and hopefully, with extra funding, the club can continue to run successfully for many more years to come. Ensuring continued work for their local staff members and providing quality, low-cost care for local children.

8.1.18

<b>Applicant Project</b>	<b>The Creative Mental Health Charity PoetsIN</b> Delivering ten of their One Hour Wellbeing Workshops to Hitchin-based schools.
<b>Sum requested</b>	£1,000
<b>Total project cost</b>	£1,200
<b>Match funding</b>	£200 Green Policy Levy and Reserve Funds.
<b>Previous support</b>	No
<b>NHDC Policy met</b>	Yes
<b>Council objectives</b>	People First A Brighter Future Together

- 8.1.19 The Creative Mental Health Charity PoetsIN will be delivering ten of their One Hour Wellbeing Workshops to Hitchin based schools, which are fun, informative and interactive, and leave the participants armed with tools to manage anxiety, worry, stress and wellbeing; having been signposted to many more tools for life (wellbeing, mindfulness, depression and anxiety management).
- 8.1.20 Each workshop can have up to 30 participants, which means for as little as £3.33 per person (in funding from the council), 300 children, young people and adults will receive immediate wellbeing as well as being shown tools that will manage mental health for life – for both themselves and others that they themselves may signpost to.
- 8.1.21 Predominantly, they are looking to focus on children in Hitchin, to help tackle the mental health and suicide crisis currently being seen in children and young people. These will be ages nine and upwards to 18, either in schools face to face or via Zoom if that is a preferred method.
- 8.1.22 If the need is there for some Hitchin-based adults, they can assign that accordingly and end up with a mix of ages benefitting from their creative mental health tools and programmes. In a literal sense, 300 will benefit initially across 10 One Hour Wellbeing Workshops. However, the secondary benefit of them passing on tools and methods could easily be estimated at a further 600. This is something that they commonly see; with word of mouth spreading after such positive interactions with their lived experience team.
- 8.1.23 Once funding is allocated, they would look at rolling out the workshops as soon as possible, with their primary focus being in schools. If the funding landed in July, this would afford them a few weeks of school term time before summer holidays to deliver. They will then utilise the remainder after the summer holidays. It will be delivered within schools in the Hitchin.
- 8.1.24 They have excellent social media presence and are members of many online and in-person local community groups and committees. They also have \$10k of PPC campaigns from Google per month that they can use accordingly. Their PR company can also send out a press release to local press, and they have regular contact with and a campaign through Heart FM.
- 8.1.25 Not only are they meeting the Council's objective of being more welcoming and inclusive, but they are in fact echoing their own mission statement: PoetsIN will continuously strive to maintain a community that is INspiring, INclusive, INformative, and one that recognises the INdividuality in each person, through creative programmes, one-to-one support services, a supportive online community, and a team of caring, professional, and dedicated staff and volunteers. These workshops will help to do this whilst stripping away the stigma attached to mental health for the greater good.

- 8.1.26 The tools they teach through activities in the workshops, combined with the signposting to further free tools on their website have delivered incredible, measured results. There is no greater resilience than to manage ones wellbeing to be able to deal with the challenges life throws at us; which in turns filters through to social, home and work life. It couldn't be more resilience building. 100% of children on their programmes said they were more in control of their symptoms, 100% said it had taught them self-care and 100% said it had been valuable to them.
- 8.1.27 On a more literal level, their Green Policy puts a surcharge of an extra 10% on any interventions that could be delivered virtually but are insisted upon being in-person (where the service users don't necessarily require it). Therefore this grant helps sustain them as a charity and will pave the way for more levies to more organisations.
- 8.1.28 There is a mental health crisis currently, throughout all ages and backgrounds. This is a very real environmental stress on all. Their workshops are helping to alleviate this whilst the waiting list for traditional support can be months and months and mean the difference between life and death.

## **8.2 Community Engagement Update and previous grants awarded**

### **8.2.1 Community Engagement Team**

The team have been continuing to engage and network with local community groups and initiatives. This involved:

- Processing grants to utilise the Health Protection Board funding to assist the community's recovery following the Covid 19 Pandemic.
- Supporting various local and district wide Network Groups such as Youth Action, Food Provision, the Arts and Culture Network and the Westmill Network Group.
- Supporting the first Hitchin Eco Day event.
- Arranged for a fully sponsored place on the Rotary Youth Leadership Awards weekend for our Chair's Community Recognition Awards Young Star award winner.
- Facilitating the NHC Hitchin Councillors' Community Surgeries.
- Continuing to share and disseminate information on social media and to mailing lists, keeping in touch with the community, voluntary, statutory, and non-statutory agencies.
- Attending JAG (Joint Action Group) and SAG (Safety Advisory Group) meetings to pass on and share information.
- Sharing information and assisting groups with events planned for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee weekend.
- Gathering speakers and information for the Cabinet Panel for Community Engagement and Co-operative Development.
- Working more closely with North Herts Youth Strategy Partnership Group.
- We also have a new team member, Aimee Flack, who will be covering Southern Rural.

## 8.2.2 Update on Previous Grants Awarded

- Ravidassia Community Centre – update  
Work is now complete and the Engagement team have been to see the finished kitchen.



- Quaker Meeting House – update  
Work is now complete on the Hitchin Unity Sculpture and the Hitchin Committee members, and the Engagement team, have been invited to the opening ceremony on July 2<sup>nd</sup>.



### 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 July 2021. 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 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. Hitchin Area Committee Budget spreadsheet.
- 10.2 The current 2022/23 base budget is **£11,000**, with **£775** carried forward from the 2021/22 budget. This leaves a budget available of **£11,775**.
- 10.3 The grant applications for this meeting total **£3,135** and if the Members agree the grants outlined in this report this will leave a balance of **£8,640**.

## 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. Certain projects outlined in this report are targeted towards specific age groups (see sections 8.1.1, 8.1.2 and 8.1.3). Age is recognised as a protected characteristic, and these projects seek to advance equality of opportunity for individuals within these age groups.

## **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 None

## **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. Hitchin Area Committee Budget spreadsheet

## **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 July 2021.