

**ROYSTON COMMITTEE
29 JUNE 2022**

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

TITLE OF REPORT: GRANTS & COMMUNITY UPDATE

REPORT OF: THE POLICY & COMMUNITIES MANAGER

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

COUNCIL OBJECTIVES: PEOPLE FIRST, SUSTAINABILITY, A BRIGHTER FUTURE TOGETHER

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 agree the future frequency for Councillor Surgeries and Town Talks as detailed in 8.2.1.

2.2 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.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 To ensure the Committee is kept informed of the work of the Community Engagement Officer.

3.2 With reference to point 2.1 above, the Community Engagement Officer is seeking advice from the Committee on the best way forward with regards to future provision of Town Talk and Councillor Surgeries.

- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 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.

7.1. 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 2022/23. 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 2022/23 is summarised below:

	2021/22 Carry Forward	2020/21 Base Budget	Total Budget Remaining
Royston	£1 ,130*	£6,000	£7,130

**The carry forward from 2021/22 was £3,130 but the Committee agreed to the allocation of £1500 to the Free After 3pm Parking Initiative and £500 for the maintenance of the High Street Planters. This funding is to be released during May/June 2022.*

8.0. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1. Future Grants

8.2. The Royston Community Engagement Officer (CEO) has been working with several groups / organisations who are seeking funding support from the Royston & District Committee. The applications below were not able to be tabled at the June meeting so have been deferred until a meeting in the 2022/23 financial year. Details of the applications are included in the table below:

Group	Project	Funding Requested
Royston Choral Society	Funding support to assist with publicity, equipment and venue hire costs for concert to be held during early 2022.	Not known at this stage.
Royston Town Youth Football Club	Funding support to assist with costs for the purchase of 4 sets of mini goals for the club.	The goals are £2.5k per set. The Royston Community Engagement Officer has signposted the club to other funding streams including Sport England and the Football Foundation as funding required is greater than the Committee's annual budget. The Royston CEO has provided an update on this project under 8.17 below.

8.3. Community Engagement Updates

8.4. Town Talk & Councillor Surgeries in Royston

8.5. Town Talk and Councillor Surgeries were introduced to Royston in 2020 as mechanisms for better engaging with residents on local issues.

8.6. Royston & District was the last committee to set up Town Talks which are well established and supported in the other towns, particularly Hitchin and Letchworth.

8.7. In terms of Councillor Surgeries, these are run in Hitchin, Letchworth and Royston but not currently in Baldock who instead hold ad-hoc Q&A sessions. Baldock have held one such session which proved popular. The session was held in conjunction with a well-established community event which helped drive footfall for the Q&A session. Councillor Surgeries are held monthly in Letchworth & Hitchin and on a 6/7-week basis in Royston.

- 8.8. During the two years of running Town Talk and Councillor Surgeries in Royston, attendance has been low, especially with Town Talk which only attracts 1 or 2 members of the Public. It has often been the case that whilst attendance has been better for the Councillor Surgeries, number of issues raised remain low.
- 8.9. In terms of resourcing, both Town Talk and Councillor Surgeries are promoted on social media by the Royston CEO and NHC Communications Team and posters are also displayed around the town on public notice boards and in shop fronts. The Royston CEO also liaises with The Listing and the local Parish Councils.
- 8.10. In terms of both Town Talk and Councillor Surgeries there is also a requirement for both Officers and Members to attend sessions during the early evening and at weekends, with on most occasions' officers/members heavily outnumbering members of the public in attendance.
- 8.11. The Royston CEO would like the Committee to consider and agree on the following options for Town Talks and Councillor Surgeries in Royston.

Option 1 – Continue with Town Talk as it is currently with a session to be held before each Area Committee Meeting.

Option 2 – Remove Town Talk and hold themed Town Talks prior to the Area Committee Meeting as and when required.

Option 3 – Continue with Councillor Surgeries in the current frequency of 6-7 weeks.

Option 4 – Reduce the frequency of Councillor Surgeries to once every two months.

Option 5 – Reduce the frequency of Councillor Surgeries to once every two months with these on occasion being held as Q&A type sessions as part of Community events around the Town.

8.12. Royston Environment Group

8.13. The Royston Community Engagement Officer (CEO) was assisting Royston Environment Group with a funding application to the Royston Area Committee for funding support for their Sustain-ability event in October.

8.14. The group was seeking funding for several elements that could not be funded via the Committee such as waste collection arrangements and Public Liability Insurance which would have been paid for prior to the Committee meeting.

8.15. Through good connections with Johnson Matthey, the Royston CEO was able to signpost the group to funding from Johnson Matthey who were able to provide the full funding of £800 for the Sustain-ability event.

8.16. Royston Town Youth Football Club

8.17. As detailed in point 8.1 above under Future Grants, the Royston CEO has been working with Royston Town Youth Football Club to identify funding for the purchase of 4 sets of mini goals for the club. The Royston CEO has liaised with colleagues in Planning and it

has been possible to allocate £10k from S106 Community Facilities funding for the new goals. Royston Town Youth Football Club have been sent the S106 funding application form and the funds will be released to the club on receipt of the invoice for the equipment.

8.18. Royston Rockets BMX Track

8.19. The Royston CEO has been assisting Royston Rockets in identifying funding streams for the resurfacing of the BMX track on Burns Road. Royston Rockets had originally submitted a funding application to the Royston Committee, but this was not necessary as the Royston CEO was able to find £12k support from the S106 Community Facilities pot. The funding from S106 has now been allocated and will be drawn down when the resurfacing works are complete. The overall project cost for the resurfacing project is £16k. The club is providing £3k to the project and the remaining £1k has been secured via funds from Johnson Matthey.

8.20. The Club was hoping to carry out the resurfacing works during the first half of 2022 but due to cost and availability of materials, the works are now scheduled for September/October 2022.

8.21. Bus Shelter for Melbourn Street

8.22. The Royston CEO first investigated a bus shelter for Melbourn Street back in March 2019 but due to Covid-19 and supply issues the installation was continually delayed.

8.23. The shelter was finally installed during early June 2022 and is being well used by residents and visitors to the town.

8.24. Ramped access to Market Hill Carpark

8.25. Following the installation of the bike shelter on Market Hill Carpark in 2021, it has been suggested by users of the bike shelter to have a sloped section to the stairs leading from the A10 into the car park.

8.26. This potential scheme is being investigated by the Royston CEO in conjunction with County Councillors, Highways Engineers and the Royston Town Council Market manager.

8.27. A site visit is scheduled for June 2022 to discuss the feasibility of the project and S106 Sustainable Transport funds have been identified for funding the project.

8.28. Trinity Life Church Community Facility Project

8.29. Trinity Life Church was successful in its application for funding from the Community Facilities Capital Projects funding Stream, securing £50k to assist with the refurbishment and alterations of The Old School House Building. The project will include replacing the kitchen and toilets, improving disabled access, and improving the rear office space.

- 8.30. Phase 1 of the project as detailed above is now complete and the final payment for the works funded by North Herts Council via the Community Facilities Capital projects funding stream will be released during June 2022. It should be noted that North Herts Council only provided financial support for Phase 1 of the project and that works to the building will be ongoing during 2022. Phase 2 will involve replacing the roof and phase 3 potentially putting in a mezzanine floor.
- 8.31. Barkway Village Market Event
- 8.32. The Barkway Village Market Event was held on Saturday 7th May and was extremely well supported with around 4000 visitors on the day.
- 8.33. The Royston CEO assisted with the paperwork as required by the North Herts Safety Advisory Group (SAG) and also provided marshal support on the day.
- 8.34. Reed Beacon Event
- 8.35. The Royston CEO assisted Barkway Parish Council with the planning for their Beacon lighting ceremony as part of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations.
- 8.36. The Royston CEO assisted with the TCPA Road Closure application and provided advice on the Traffic Management Plan and marshal arrangements.
- 8.37. The event was held on Thursday 2nd June and was well supported by residents from both Barkway and Reed.
- 8.38. Signposting to Royston Bowls Club
- 8.39. The Royston CEO was approached by the Chair of Royston Bowls Club seeking support for signage to direct people to the bowls club.
- 8.40. The Royston CEO has liaised with officers at Hertfordshire Highways and County Councillors and signage has been agreed for Green Drift to signpost people to the bowls club. It is hoped that the signage will be erected during the next couple of months. The project will be funded via Councillor Steve Jarvis's Herts County Council Locality Budget.
- 8.41. Sanitiser for local groups and events
- 8.42. The Royston CEO received a donation of 1300 units of hand sanitiser from a company in Royston during April 2022.
- 8.43. The Royston CEO has distributed all of the sanitiser to venues in Royston and for events in the local area.
- 8.44. Events across North Herts
- 8.45. As well as supporting events in Royston, the Royston CEO is also assisting organisers of events planned in Letchworth including the Letchworth Colour Run which will be held

on Sat 11th June and Armed Forces Day and Fountain to Fountain Hike which will both be held on Saturday 25th June 2022. The Royston CEO has assisted with paperwork as required by the North Herts Safety Advisory Group and will also provide support with event set up and take down.

8.46. Queens Platinum Jubilee Celebrations

8.47. The Royston CEO was the link officer within the Community Engagement Team for people /groups looking to organise street parties as part of the Queens Platinum Jubilee Celebrations. The Royston CEO signposted groups to the Herts County Council link for road closures and also provided support to groups with the required paperwork as required by North Herts Safety Advisory Group (SAG). There were 5 street party events held across Royston over the Jubilee weekend.

8.48. As well as supporting the Street Parties, the Royston CEO also provided support for the Royston Picnic in the Park Jubilee event which was held on Sunday 5th June. Support included help with event publicity and also marshal support on the day.

8.49. Developer Contributions / s106 & other Capital Funding projects

8.50. 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
- Bike Shelter at Market Square Car park
- Bus Shelter at Icknield Walk
- Bike racks at Heath Sports and Social Club
- Kitchen and accessibility improvements in the main hall of Royston Town Hall.
- Bus Shelter at Melbourn Street.

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 was on the work programme for 2020/21 but has been delayed due to the Covid-19 Pandemic)

- A505 Cycle Path project
- All weather Hockey pitch for Royston
- Barkway PC re the installation & disabled access to the Recreation Ground & Pavilion

8.51. 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.

8.52. 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.

8.53. 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.

8.54. Highways Matters

8.55. 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.

8.56. 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 2021/22.
- 10.2 The agreed base budget for this financial year is £6,000. The Committee has £1,130 to allocate from the 2021/22 carry forward. This gives the Committee a total of £7,130 to allocate across the 4 meetings of the 2022/23 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 July 2021.