

***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 Members' attention to 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 **£1,980** to Hong Kong Connect towards their English Language Course as outlined in paragraphs 8.1.1-8.1.6 of the officer's report.
- 2.3 **£1,424** to The North Herts African and Caribbean Community towards funding to provide a year of subsidised and free events and activities for the whole community to learn about African and Caribbean history and culture as outlined in paragraphs 8.1.7-8.1.13 of the officer's report.
- 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 Letchworth.

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 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 Grants Policy as agreed by Cabinet in July 2021.
- 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, during 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.
- 7.2 Members are asked to note the information detailed in Appendix 1. Letchworth 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 Letchworth area committee has sufficient funds in the 2022/2023 budget.

8.1 Grant Applications

8.1.1

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| Applicant | Hong Kong Connect |
| Project | English Language Course |
| Sum requested | £1,980 |
| Total project cost | £4,740 |
| Match funding | £1,000 Members fees £1,760 Hall Hire will be free |
| Previous support | £2,500 from NHDC pump priming budget was paid to North Hertfordshire Minority Ethnic Forum to establish Hong Kong Connect. Paid out in January 2022. |
| NHDC Policy met | Yes |
| Council objectives | People First A Brighter Future Together |

8.1.2 There are many new Hong Kong citizens who have settled into Letchworth Garden City and the surrounding area. Language is the biggest barrier for this group which prevents them integrating with the wider British society. The group members would like to set up an English language class so that they can learn English in a non-confrontational community venue with people in a similar situation i.e. the BNO (British Nationals Overseas) Hong Kong people. This project will aim to help them in their adaptation and acculturation into British culture and the English language.

8.1.3 The group would like to use the funds applied for to pay for English language tutor. There will be two classes weekly, which both last three hours.

8.1.4 The course will initially be running for three months, from January to March 2023 (school Spring Term), which consists of 11 weeks. The sessions will help approximately 50 people.

8.1.5 The proposed project is good value for money as they need minimal cost to set up this project, they have secured a classroom at the Icknield Centre free of charge. Volunteers will set up, monitor and supervise the project. They have a partner organisation to provide free resources.

8.1.6 Promotion will be through word of mouth, their website and social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp etc.

8.1.7

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| Applicant | The North Herts African and Caribbean Community |
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| Project | Providing a year of subsidised and free events and activities for the whole community to learn about African and Caribbean history and culture. |
| Sum requested | £1,424 |
| Total project cost | £3,675 |
| Match funding | £251 Current Account Contents £2,000 Tickets for Community Events |
| Previous support | Yes, in 2020 |
| NHDC Policy met | Yes |
| Council objectives | People First A Brighter Future Together |

- 8.1.8 As part of their Beyond Black History Month project, the group aim to put on various events and activities for the whole community to learn about African and Caribbean History and Culture. Some events would be free and others subsidised to encourage strong attendance. Events planned include:
- 8.1.9 “Mind Your Black” - mental health creative writing and mindfulness workshops focused on discussing the effects of racial discrimination, crime and crime prevention on the African and Caribbean community. The public and professionals will be invited to come together and work in groups to discuss the issues.
- 8.1.10 Celebration and research events designed to bring people from African Diaspora cultures together to discuss issues that affect their particular minority group. Local stakeholders will be invited in a bid to re-establish links between professionals and the public. The group hope to empower the community to have a voice within local decision making.
- 8.1.11 Black history and culture held in the community, held alongside workshops to enable attendees to discuss the topics in a supportive environment.
- 8.1.12 Windrush Arts and Crafts Week. A group of children and young people will be involved in a creative project that will result in an art installation in honour of the HMT Empire Windrush. The participants will be taught about the history of the Windrush generation, with direct first-person accounts of their experiences coming to the “Mother Country”. The installation will be displayed at an annual fundraiser for the North Herts. African and Caribbean Lunch Club. They hope to run this activity in partnership with the North Herts Museum and Hertfordshire libraries.
- 8.1.13 They have also approached the Hitchin Area Committee for £1,424.

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:

- To celebrate Local Democracy Week and Parliament Week in October/November, the team supported councillors in visits to schools for assemblies and Q&A sessions.
- Facilitating the NHC Councillors' Community Surgeries and exploring the idea of themed Town Talks. For example, the next Hitchin Town Talk will be focus on the Churchgate public consultation.
- Supporting various local and districtwide network groups including the Jackmans Network Group, the Grange Network Group, Youth Action, Food Provision, Arts and Culture and the newly resurrected Green and Growing Group.
- The team are co-ordinating a hybrid event for Holocaust Memorial Day on 27th January 2023.
- The team supported the Letchworth Remembrance Day event on 13th November 2022.
- 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.
- Attending the Letchworth Town Centre Strategy Group meeting set up by Letchworth Heritage Foundation.
- Sharing information to community contacts that can help with the current Cost of Living Crisis and sharing information about local warm hubs.
- Delivering and promoting The Snowman Trail in North Herts. Sculptures based on the classic film The Snowman were installed on November 17th (working closely with Wild in Art, Hitchin Bid and Cala Homes). Letchworth artist Sarah Graham decorated one of the statues.

8.2.2 Update on Previous Grants Awarded

- **National Childbirth Trust (NCT) North Herts – Letchworth Bumps and Babies – update**

National Childbirth Trust (NCT) North Herts was awarded £920 towards their local breastfeeding and postnatal support group Letchworth Bumps and Babies, which meets twice a month throughout the year at Mrs Howard Memorial Hall.

NCT Herts North Baby Cafe Letchworth – ‘We are hugely pleased to have been awarded a grant by the local council to support our breastfeeding and postnatal support group in Letchworth, it means we can continue to run the group for the local community for the next year at least. The group may help someone breastfeed for longer than they may have hoped, or just prevent a new parent feeling isolated at a difficult time.’ – Hannah Lane, NCT Events, Publicity and Social Media Coordinator.



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. Letchworth Area Committee Budget spreadsheet.
- 10.2 The 2022/23 base budget was **£11,000**, with **£2,956** carried forward from the 2021/22 budget. **£3,760** was granted at the last Committee meeting and grants awarded to date total **£7,810**. This leaves a budget available of **£6,146**.
- 10.3 The grant applications for this meeting total **£3,404** and if the Members agree the grants outlined in this report this will leave a balance of **£2,742**.

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.

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 pertinent Environmental implications associated with any items within 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. Letchworth Area Committee Budget spreadsheet

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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.