

BALDOCK COMMITTEE 20th March 2023

***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 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 Community Engagement officers have been involved in.
- 1.4 To bring to 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 **£750** to Headway Hertfordshire towards peer support group sessions as outlined in paragraphs 8.1.1-8.1.4 of this report.
- 2.3 That the Committee agrees that any unspent funds from the 2022/23 financial year be allocated to the Baldock Area Committee budget for the 2023/24 period.
- 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 Baldock.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To ensure 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. Baldock 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 Baldock Area Committee has sufficient funds in the 2022/2023 budget.

8.1 Grant Applications

8.1.1

Applicant Project	Headway Hertfordshire Peer support group sessions for people affected by brain injury.
Sum requested	£750
Total project cost	£2,600
Match funding	£100 fundraising £600 Coop fund £400 The Hospital Saturday fund <i>£750 Headway are approaching Letchworth Area Committee at the June/July meeting having deferred from March.</i>
Previous support	2018: £1,500 Letchworth Committee; £1,500 Hitchin Committee.
NHDC Policy met	Yes
Council objectives	People First A brighter future together

8.1.2 Headway Hertfordshire offer care, support and education/information to those over 18 affected by an acquired brain injury. They support more than 200 residents in North Herts, of which approximately 30% are in Baldock and the surrounding area.

8.1.3 The group would like funding towards running peer support group sessions, which will deliver stimulating content, and offer service users and their carers opportunities to communicate and socialise. The funding would help cover the cost of hall hire, staff and activities.

8.1.4 Having run similar sessions in other areas and a well-received pilot session at Letchworth Salvation Hall, Headway aims to start the sessions in May. There will be two sessions each month for a period of 10 months.

8.2 Community Engagement Update and previous grants awarded

8.2.1 Baldock Councillor Surgery

8.2.2 At the October 2022 Baldock Committee meeting, Councillors agreed to trial Councillor Surgeries in Baldock for a six-month period. These would be held on the last Saturday of every month 10.30am-12noon outside Tesco.

8.2.3 Officers liaised with the store manager of Baldock Tesco who gave permission for the surgeries to go ahead. Officers promoted the surgery on social media and in The Comet Newspaper Online and provided posters for promoting the surgery.

8.2.4 The first surgery was held on Saturday 28 January and was well supported with Councillors responding to around 15 queries from the public.

8.2.5 Community Engagement Team

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

- Supporting local community groups and initiatives, including Baldock Community Forum.
- Co-ordinating support for asylum seekers at Days Inn (Baldock) and Villare (Hitchin).
- Supporting North Herts CVS and Letchworth Heritage Foundation with planning the All About Us Community Conference, an event for groups districtwide. [All About Us Community Conference Tickets, Thu 23 Mar 2023 at 09:30 | Eventbrite](#)
- Co-ordinating and hosting the North Herts Heroes Awards 2023. The event can be viewed here: [North Herts Heroes Awards 2023 - YouTube](#)
- The team co-ordinated an event for Holocaust Memorial Day which was on 27th January 2023. The recording can be viewed online [North Herts Council marks Holocaust Memorial Day | North Herts Council \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](#).
- 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.
- Facilitating NHC Councillors' Community Surgeries.

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. Baldock Area Committee Budget spreadsheet.
- 10.2 The 2022/23 base budget was **£5,000**, with **£2,565** carried forward from the 2021/22 budget, giving a total budget for the year of **£7,565**. Grants awarded to date total **£2,000**. This leaves a budget available of **£5,565**.
- 10.3 The grant applications for this meeting total **£750** and if Members agree the grants outlined in this report this will leave a balance of **£4,815** to carry forward into the 2023/24 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. Baldock Area Committee Budget spreadsheet

17. CONTACT OFFICERS

17.1 Author: Becca Edwards, Assistant Community Engagement Officer
Email: becca.edwards@north-herts.gov.uk ext. 4230

Contributors: Reuben Ayavoo, Policy & Communities Manager
Email: reuben.ayavoo@north-herts.gov.uk ext. 4212

Georgina Chapman, Corporate Policy Team Leader
Email: Georgina.Chapman@north-herts.gov.uk ext. 4121

Claire Morgan, Community Engagement Team Leader
Email: Claire.morgan@north-herts.gov.uk ext. 4226

Anne Miller, Assistant Accountant
Email: Anne.Miller@north-herts.gov.uk ext. 4374

Yvette Roberts, Legal Officer
Email: Yvette.roberts@north-herts.gov.uk ext. 4310

Tim Everitt, Performance & Risk Officer
Email: tim.everitt@north-herts.gov.uk ext. 4646

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.