

HITCHIN COMMITTEE 28th 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 **£932** to Buzzworks resources to help deliver educational sessions as outlined in paragraphs 8.1.1-8.1.4 of this report.
- 2.3 **£459** to Friends of Whitehill and Highbury Schools towards four gazebos as outlined in paragraphs 8.1.5-8.1.9 of this report.
- 2.4 **£2,500** to Red Media Love CIC towards a Singh Sabha football exhibition as outlined in paragraphs 8.1.10-8.1.15 of this report.
- 2.5 That the Committee agrees that any unspent funds from the 2022/23 financial year be allocated to the Hitchin Area Committee budget for the 2023/24 period.

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| 2.6 | 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. |
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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. 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

Applicant	Buzzworks
Project	Resources to help deliver educational sessions.
Sum requested	£932
Total project cost	£1,035
Match funding	£103 fundraising
Previous support	2019: £915 Hitchin Area Grant towards furniture to accommodate school visits
NHDC Policy met	Yes
Council objectives	People First A brighter future together Sustainability

8.1.2 Buzzworks main activities are educational visits, honey production for sale on their market stall and holding open and experience days. Visits have a minimal charge, as the group aim for visits to be accessible to all.

8.1.3 The group would like funding towards resources that are used for educational visits. Items they would like to purchase include:

- Gardening gloves
- Microscope
- Printed posters
- Flower displays
- UV dark box
- Camera
- Mirrors

8.1.4 The group believe that educating the community, especially young people about the environment, in particular saving and protecting the bees is imperative to ensure the future of our planet. Buzzworks always aim to work in a sustainable way, recycling and reusing materials and are very resourceful, therefore having very little waste.

8.1.5

Applicant	Friends of Whitehill and Highbury Schools
Project	Four gazebos.
Sum requested	£459
Total project cost	£611.92
Match funding	£153 fundraising
Previous support	No
NHDC Policy met	Yes
Council objectives	People First Sustainability

8.1.6 Friends of Whitehill and Highbury Schools (FOWHS) organise social events for the children of Whitehill and Highbury Schools to help build a community between the two schools whilst also raising much-needed funds.

8.1.7 The group would like four robust gazebos and sets of weights for use at events at both schools to provide shade/shelter for children/volunteers. They are purchasing one set themselves and would like help with funds to purchase three more sets of gazebos and weights. Their existing gazebos are no longer fit for purpose due to extensive use.

8.1.8 The gazebos would be made available to both schools to use during the schools' day and for school-led events as needed, and also to community groups (eg Scouts) who use the school sites for their events and activities.

8.1.9 FOWHS have researched various options by seeking feedback and recommendations from other similar organisations to decide on the gazebos they wish to purchase. The items chosen are robust and have the option of purchasing replacement parts, should this be necessary – rather than having to replace the whole item, which improves sustainability.

8.1.10

Applicant	Red Media Love CIC
Project	Singh Sabha football visual exhibition.
Sum requested	£2,500
Total project cost	£3,500
Match funding	£1,000 fundraising
Previous support	2022: £2,480 Hitchin area Committee grant towards visual exhibition
NHDC Policy met	Yes
Council objectives	People First

8.1.11 North Herts has a huge south Asian community who have paved a life for themselves in this area since they first migrated here in the 1960s. They integrated themselves and their families well by adjusting and embracing the local culture whilst still retaining their strong connections from their respective homelands. One way the young south Asian men did this is through football.

- 8.1.12 During this time, the second generation growing up in the area felt isolated from their peers due to their cultural differences which they felt hindered their progression. This led the young men to approach their local Gurdwara, Singh Sabha Hitchin to help support them. They were also sponsored by local business S&K Stores. They created an A, B & C team which went onto winning tournaments and leagues across the UK. This team has spanned two generations with the last games taking place in the early 2000s.
- 8.1.13 The funding would go towards high quality filming of key members of the team and hearing their stories first hand. Red Media Love also have old footage and images which will be used as reference throughout.
- 8.1.14 Red Media Love are hoping to film the individual stories and take portraits of the participants to be displayed at North Herts Museum. The full content will be used across social media with the documentary being available on YouTube. They are also talking to the local Gurdwara about hosting screenings there.
- 8.1.15 At the time of writing this report, Red Media Love have had preliminary discussions with North Herts Museum about holding the exhibition in their gallery, but the venue has not yet been confirmed. If the Committee approve this application it will be an in-principle allocation only until the venue has been confirmed and the necessary consent and permissions are in place. Without the assurances of these the proposed exhibition cannot take place.

8.2 Community Engagement Update

8.2.1 Community Engagement Team

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

- Co-ordinating support for asylum seekers in Hitchin and Baldock.
- Co-ordinating and hosting the North Herts Heroes Awards 2023. The event can be viewed here: [North Herts Heroes Awards 2023 - YouTube](#)
- 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](#)
- 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. Hitchin Area Committee Budget spreadsheet.
- 10.2 The 2022/23 base budget was **£11,000**, with **£775** carried forward from the 2021/22 budget, giving a total budget for the year of **£11,775**. Grants awarded to date total **£6,679**. This leaves a budget available of **£5,096**.
- 10.3 The grant applications for this meeting total **£3,891** and if Members agree the grants outlined in this report this will leave a balance of **£1,205** 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 The grant requested by Buzzworks would help educate about the environment.

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

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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.