

**HITCHIN COMMITTEE  
11 SEPTEMBER 2018**

**\*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

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

REPORT OF THE COMMUNITIES MANAGER  
EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND RURAL AFFAIRS

PRIORITY: ATTRACTIVE AND THRIVING / PROSPER AND PROTECT / RESPONSIVE AND  
EFFICIENT

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 To advise the Committee on the current expenditure and balances of the Area Committee budgets.
- 1.2 To bring to the Committee's attention details of recent requests received for Area Committee Grant Funding, made by community groups and local organisations.
- 1.3 To advise the Committee of the activities and schemes with which the Community Officer has been involved.
- 1.4 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 considers allocating funding from their discretionary community budget towards the projects below:
- 2.2 £1,500 MS Society towards a specialist exercise bicycle as outlined in 8.1.1
- 2.3 £2,000 to Strathmore Fun Club to assist with the hire of the venue for the afterschool club as outlined in 8.1.2
- 2.4 That the Committee endorses the actions taken by the Community Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being for Hitchin.

### **3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 To ensure the Committee is kept informed of the work of the Community Officer.
- 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 existing Grants policy as agreed by Cabinet in June 2016.
- 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 Corporate 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 with regard to funding proposals for Area Committee Funds.

### **6. FORWARD PLAN**

- 6.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key decision and has not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

### **7. BACKGROUND**

- 7.1 Members are asked to note the information detailed in Appendix A Hitchin Area Committee Budget Spread sheet, which relates to the Area Committee budget balances for 2018/19.
- 7.2 The spreadsheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial years, including balances and past expenditure.

## 8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

### 8.1 Grant Applications

8.1.1	<b>Applicant</b>	North Herts Multiple Sclerosis Society
	<b>Project</b>	Purchase of a specialist exercise bicycle
	<b>Sum requested</b>	£1,500
	<b>Total project cost</b>	£12,720
	<b>Match funding</b>	£8,000
	<b>Annual expenditure</b>	£26,964.44
	<b>Funds held</b>	£26,568.13
	<b>Previous support</b>	None
	<b>NHDC Policy met</b>	Yes
	<b>Strategic objective met</b>	Attractive & Thriving and Prosper & Protect

North Herts MS Society is requesting £1,500 towards the total of £4,480 cost of a specialist exercise bicycle.

The group are trying to raise £12,720 towards a range of physiotherapy methods for the group who meet weekly at Hadleigh a sheltered housing scheme in Letchworth.

Their members are drawn from across North Herts District to attend and undertake activities such as Neuro Physiotherapy, Pilates and Occupational Therapy. The addition of the specialist exercise bicycle will be a huge help to their members' health and wellbeing enabling them to stay stronger for as long as possible when living with a condition such as MS.

The group have fundraised £8,000 towards these activities but are requesting that NHDC provide the necessary funding to purchase the exercise bicycle.

As their members attend from all areas of North Herts officers have split this grant by a per capita percentage and the sums being requested from each Area Committee are:

Hitchin	£1,500
Letchworth	£1,500
Baldock & District	£740
Royston & District	£740

A contribution from the Southern Rural Area Committee is not being requested as very few people attend from that area.

This organisation receives no Rate Support or other formal benefits from NHDC.

This organisation has never received an NHDC grant in the past.

8.1.2	<b>Applicant</b>	Strathmore Fun Club
	<b>Project</b>	Funding towards venue hire for afterschool activities
	<b>Sum requested</b>	£2,000
	<b>Total project cost</b>	£4,940
	<b>Match funding</b>	£500
	<b>Annual expenditure</b>	£80,283
	<b>Funds held</b>	£24,341
	<b>Previous support</b>	None
	<b>NHDC Policy met</b>	Yes
	<b>Strategic objective met</b>	Attractive & Thriving and Prosper & Protect

The Strathmore afterschool club was set up in 1998 and now provides both afterschool and holiday activities for approximately 40 children per day from schools around the Hitchin area.

They provide fun activities and a cooked meal. They try to keep the cost to families as low as possible in order to make the service affordable to local families. They have had to make a small increase this year as their own costs have increased. The not for profit group are requesting £2,000 grant funding in order to cover the shortfall in covering the cost of venue hire.

## 8.2 **Update on Previous Grants awarded and Community Engagement**

### 8.2.1 Herts & Essex Air Ambulance Shop Defibrillator

This equipment was purchased following a grant application in December 2017.

The equipment has now been installed and included in the list of equipment available around the town. The organisation has also now linked up with the local first responders.

There is to be a PR event with funders and local press on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2018.

### 8.2.2 Rhythms of the World

ROTW received £3,756 grant funding for the event that was planned to take place around Hitchin town centre, market place and St Mary's Church.

Due to objections placed on their premises licence application by the Police and NHDC Environmental Health the group's application went to appeal via the Licencing Committee.

Subsequently, the Committee agreed a licence, but not for the Town Centre, or Market Place, only for the Church area.

Unfortunately St Mary's Church was unwilling to host the whole event and as the Authority had prevented ROTW from using the Town Centre the Church declined to take part.

The volunteers at ROTW have been working very hard to find alternative venues for all the acts they had booked. There will be music in Hitchin over 3 days, 8 venues and 62 acts.

ROTW events for the 11<sup>th</sup> August 2018 - currently taking place at the following venues:

- 10.00 – 16:00 Market Place – Hitchin Art Hub (not a licensable activity)
- 12:00 – 18:15 Taste of Rhythms at Club 85
- 15:00 – 22:00 Osinskys – Local bands acoustic sessions

These events are all free entry. There is a fundraising event ticketed event at Club 85 in the evening.

The changes to the original plans have meant that any of the grant funding will most likely not be used for the items as laid out in the group's original grant application.

Therefore, Members may wish to request that any funds not used for ROTW events are returned; alternatively, they may wish to allow the organisation to hold onto the funding and stipulate that it is ring fenced for an event in 2019.

#### 8.2.3 Walsworth Parent & Toddler Group

Officers have been liaising with an individual who wishes to start up a parent and toddler group in the Walsworth area, as they have identified a lack of provision locally within that part of the town.

At present the group is not constituted and does not have a bank account. Officers have been advising on potential partners such as Walsworth Community Centre and St Faith's Church. Also on how to set up as a constituted voluntary group with a clear financial plan showing how much it will cost to start up such a group and how they will need to show its sustainability in the long term. Once these actions have been undertaken the group may come to the Hitchin Area Committee with a request for grant funding later in the year.

#### 8.2.4 Section 106 & funding secured via the Planning Process

The following amounts of Section 106 & Unilateral Undertakings / obligations are currently available for allocation / utilisation under each category heading:

Leisure:	£37,212.30
Pitch Sports:	£6,142.49
Play Space:	£4,016.25
Public Realm:	£9,952.18
Sustainable Transport:	£122,035.88

If members have any capital project in mind which may benefit from potentially utilising some of these collated funds please contact the Communities Officer to investigate further possibilities.

The Communities Team is also collating a database of future requirements in terms of community need across the District in the response to potential developments arising from the Local Plan.

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 Communities Officer.

### **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 The Area Committees also have delegated power under section 9.8.1 (a) & (b) to allocate discretionary budgets and devolved budgets within the terms determined by the Council and outlined in the current Grant Policy agreed by Cabinet in June 2016. Section 9.8.2 (g) of the Constitution in respect of Area Committees' Terms of Reference provides 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 A Committee budget 2018/19:-  
The agreed budget for this financial year is £13,700. In addition to £13,131 carried forward from 2017/18 equates to a total amount of £26,831 for the provision of Community Development Grants. It is suggested that any funds allocated use the 2017/18 funding in the first instance. At the first meeting of the financial year in June the committee allocated £11,576 of the 2017/18 carry over amount leaving £1,555 available.

The allocated budget for 2018/19 has not yet been spent and members will notice that an amount of £1800 has been added from the transfer of Members Allowances. This provides a total of £15,500 available.

- 10.2 Should Members be minded to provide grant funding as requested under recommendation 2.1 the total awarded will equate to £3,500. Utilising the remaining funds from 17/18 and the remainder from 2018/19 this would leave an amount of £13,555 to allocate prior to the end of the financial year.
- 10.3 The Capital Visioning funds are now all been drawn down and utilised for redevelopment projects in Bancroft Gardens.

## **11. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 There are no relevant risk entries that have been recorded on Pentana Performance, 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" policy do not apply to this report.

## **14. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 14.1 There are no pertinent Human Resource implications associated with any items within this report.

## **15. APPENDICES**

- 15.1 Appendix A - 2018/19 Budget Sheet

## **16. CONTACT OFFICERS**

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## **17. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 17.1 Review of Policies and Procedures for Financial Assistance to Voluntary and Community Organisations, November 2002.
- 17.2 Review of Grant Policy Cabinet June 2016.