

**HITCHIN COMMITTEE  
4 DECEMBER 2018**

**\*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

**TITLE OF REPORT: GRANTS & 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 £2,500 to the African and Caribbean Seniors and Carers Luncheon Club to assist with venue hire for one year as outlined in 8.1.1
- 2.3 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>	African and Caribbean Seniors & Carers Lunch Club
	<b>Project</b>	Assistance towards venue hire.
	<b>Sum requested</b>	£2,500
	<b>Total project cost</b>	£4,986
	<b>Match funding</b>	£2,486 from reserves
	<b>Annual expenditure</b>	£23,927
	<b>Funds held</b>	£5,549
	<b>Previous support</b>	£1,400 in December 2016 towards seated keep fit class
	<b>NHDC Policy met</b>	Yes
	<b>Strategic objective met</b>	Prosper & Protect

The African, Caribbean Seniors & Carers Lunch Club (ACS&C) is requesting £2,500 towards the total of £4,486 towards the cost of the venue.

The group was set up in 2000 and meets every Friday now based at Westmill Community Centre. They provide lunch followed by seated exercise class and an opportunity to socialise.

The members pay a weekly fee to cover the cost of their lunch and towards the running costs of the club. There are two part time staff whose wages are covered by funding from Hertfordshire County Council.

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

#### 8.2.1 Hitchin Art Club

The Hitchin Art Club submitted an application for £500 grant funding after the deadline for grants to be considered at the September meeting had passed. They requested funding towards the one off hire of the Hitchin Friends Meeting house to host their Annual exhibition and sale of members work. As the amount requested was under £500 and the event would be taking place prior to the next Hitchin Committee meeting in December, the decision was made (via the Delegated Decision process) to agree funding from Hitchin Committee grant budgets.

The decision was agreed by the Service Director of Legal and Community in consultation with the Executive Member for Community and Rural Affairs and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Hitchin Committee.

The Annual Art exhibition took place for a week from 20<sup>th</sup> October to Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> November with free entry to the public to view the work on display. Members were invited to the private view on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> October which was also attended by the NHDC Chairman Cllr John Bishop.

### 8.2.2 Hitchin Hackspace

Hitchin Hackspace received £5,000 grant funding towards the cost of renovating the former toilets at Bancroft. Progress has been slow but steady as they are undertaking much of the work themselves at evenings and weekends. The group are still operating from the Pavilion on Ransoms Recreation ground and have not yet moved into the new site.

However, they have installed the kitchenette area, wiring to install electrical sockets and the building has been redecorated internally and new secure exterior doors have been fitted. Photos of the work can be seen on the Hitchin Hackspace Facebook page.

### 8.2.3 Hitchin Stroke Group

In December 2017 the Hitchin Stroke Group submitted a grant application to the Committee requesting £1,000 towards the cost of their venue hire and transport costs. The membership was dwindling and there were two volunteers who had been running the club for many years taking over the operation following the death of the lady who had set the club up.

The group were at a turning point when they could have disbanded or work to reinvigorate the group, attracting new members and recruiting volunteers.

The Community Development Officer worked with the group and assisted them to build partnerships with Hitchin Rotarians who provided in kind resources in terms of advice and publicity. They designed new promotional material and covered the cost of printing. The members of the Rotary club used their contacts to get the Hitchin Stroke Group leaflets and posters in GP surgeries and the group now have gone from 5 members to 16.

They were also introduced to the North Herts CVS. Their membership was renewed and NHCVS assisted in recruiting a good quality volunteer to join the team.

That volunteer has recently found full time employment and has left the organisation. NHCVS will be working with the group to recruit some more and will be working with the existing volunteers to raise their profile on social media.

### 8.2.4 Chairman's Volunteer Achievement Awards

Nominations are now open for NHDC's Annual Chairman's Volunteer Achievement Awards which launched on Thursday 15 November 2018. The awards celebrate the achievements of outstanding, praiseworthy individuals who volunteer their time to make a real difference in their local community.

Wilmott Dixon has kindly agreed to sponsor the awards and the Comet have agreed to be the media sponsor.

The five categories are:

- **Caring Award** – for someone's act or acts of kindness
- **Dedication Award** – for long service in voluntary or community work
- **Sporting Achievement Award** – to recognise a major contribution to sporting life
- **Green Award** – for helping to keep North Herts clean, safe and green
- **Young Star Award** – for a young person or young people who make a difference in their local community

Last year the Judges Special Recognition Award was introduced this provides the opportunity for the judges to reward someone from the nominations who has made an especially outstanding difference to their local community.

The deadline for nominating volunteers is midnight Friday 21st December 2018. The judging panel will meet on Thursday 10th January 2019 to choose award winners. The panel consists of Chairman of the Council John Bishop, Nick Gill from the Comet, Anne Taylor, NHCVS and Steven Roberts from Willmott Dixon.

Presentation of the awards will take place at a formal NHDC event to be held in February 2019 at Wymondley Priory Barns, which will consist of a sit down meal and award ceremony where each winner will receive a trophy.

For further information or to submit a nomination please follow the link to the North Hertfordshire District Council's website:

<https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/community/chairmans-volunteer-achievement-awards>

#### 8.2.5 Various Community Activities

Advising and supporting Resolve to organise a Health and Wellbeing day a Westmill Community Centre on 24th November.

Assisting a new voluntary group setting up called 'Feed Up, Warm Up'. The project hopes to provide food, advice, hair cuts, warm clothes, sleeping bags, sanitary wear, toiletries, loo roll etc to rough sleepers, homeless and those in need. Once a week on Wednesdays throughout December initially, with a view to continuing throughout the winter months. We're putting the group in touch with suitable partner agencies such as CANH and NHCVS, the Sanctuary, Resolve local Churches etc.

Continue to lead on Westmill Network Group.

Continue to lead on Hitchin Youth Action Group. This has been merged with the Letchworth Youth Action Group as many of the same people were attending both meetings and it makes better use of resources.

The meeting with the Hitchin Church youth group leaders was successful putting some agencies together who had not been in contact before, encouraging partnership working.

Set up an afternoon with some of the groups from both of the network groups mentioned above to provide presentations to the High Sheriff of Hertfordshire. The groups explained their activities around the area of Youth Volunteering and Peer Mentoring. The High Sheriff's awards are aimed at encouraging youth volunteering and she in turn promoted the funding that is attached to her award.

### 8.2.6 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.

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.

The 2017/18 carry over has now been fully utilised and grants are now being allocated from this financial year's development budget of £15,500.

The Grants from the Hitchin Art Club and Strathmore Fun club totalling £2,455 has been spent leaving £13,045.

- 10.2 Should Members be minded to provide grant funding as requested under recommendation 2.1 the total awarded will equate to £2,500 this would leave an amount of £10,545 to allocate prior to the end of the financial year.

## **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 financial year 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.