

**SOUTHERN RURAL AREA COMMITTEE
6 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, which conform to the Authority's Grants Policy approved by Cabinet on June 14th 2016.
- 1.3 To advise the Committee of the activities and schemes with which the Community Officer has been involved.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Committee be recommended to consider the provision of grant funding to the organisations outlined below:
- 2.2 Breachwood Green Pre-School £250 to purchase furniture as outlined in 8.1.1
- 2.3 Kimpton Pre-School £2,087 to purchase IT equipment 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 the Southern Rural Area.

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 1 Southern Rural 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.
- 7.3 The current level of unallocated funds within the Committee's Development Budget for 2018/19 is **£8,400**.
- 7.4 The current level of unallocated within the Committee's Ward Members 2018/19 Budget is **£3,900**.

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 Grant Applications for Consideration

8.1.1	Applicant	Breachwood Green Pre-School Playgroup
	Project	Purchase of furniture
	Sum requested	£250
	Total project cost	£1,000
	Match funding	£750 from HCC and fundraising activities
	Annual expenditure	£37,970
	Funds held	£6,248
	Previous support	£850 in 2012 towards play area surfacing
	NHDC Policy met	Yes
	Strategic objective met	Attractive & Thriving

The group operate as a not for profit Pre-school for children aged 2 rising to 5. They are a small charity run preschool operating from a room which is rented from the village hall.

The new chairs will provide a safe, comfortable and inviting area for the children to play and learn in. The preschool was decorated in summer 2018, and the new furniture will benefit not only the children currently at the setting, but will also make the space brighter and more attractive for prospective new children looking to join the preschool.

Children come to the preschool from Breachwood Green and surrounding areas. The Pre School is open Monday to Thursday 9am-3pm during term time.

8.1.2	Applicant	Kimpton Pre-School Playgroup
	Project	Purchase of IT equipment
	Sum requested	£2,086
	Total project cost	£2,086
	Match funding	No match funding for IT equipment but they continually fund raise to cover operational costs and have received £1,000 from the Kimpton May Festival and *£700 from commercial sponsor.
	Annual expenditure	£66,671.00
	Funds held	£3,582.00
	Previous support	£2,000 in total £1,500 in 2012 towards new surface for the play area & £500 in 2015 to further enhance the outdoor space.
	NHDC Policy met	Yes
	Strategic objective met	Attractive & Thriving

Kimpton Pre-School is a community preschool for 2- 5 year old children from Kimpton and the surrounding area, set up in 2011. The application is for funds to purchase essential IT equipment that they are unable to fundraise for. They desperately need a new PC for the office and tablets for the staff to use for children's observations uploaded to Tapestry, the industry standard for EYFS learning journals to monitor children's progress.

Tapestry has just been introduced by Kimpton nursery that they compete with in order to retain 3 year olds. They have also been offered a free digital projector through the generosity of a parent's company (*worth £700).

Kimpton Preschool is a community run asset for the whole village. Rated 'Outstanding' by OFSTED at our last inspection in 2015, the preschool provides a vital learning environment and is beloved by all those that attend. The entire management committee is made up of previous and current parents who willingly donate their time, skills and resource to every aspect of the preschool continued success as a business.

They receive no external funding at all, and are reliant on their own endeavours to ensure that they can continue to operate. Kimpton nursery offers no opportunity for 2-3 year old children, and so the Pre-School forms a vital part of the village makeup, especially as there is a lack of alternative child care settings for young children. The management committee took over in April 2017 and in the first 3 months oversaw a total change of staff, including the Preschool Manager.

This application for funding will provide not only an up to date office PC (the current one runs Windows XP and is no longer compatible with any Office program), but also by adopting Tapestry for all children's learning journals will enhance the strong and continuous drive for best practice.

8.2 Update on Community Engagement

8.2.1 Hexton Community Petanque Project

The community development officer has been in contact with the group who were hoping to initiate a Community Petanque Project for which £400 in total had been allocated from the Hitchwood Offa and Hoo ward budgets.

Unfortunately, there is no evidence that the local community would benefit from a Petanque pitch in the village and the person who was hoping to set up a group to develop the project has not made any progress in gaining support from other members of the local community.

As a result, it has been suggested that the funds allocated to this project are reallocated to the development budget to be made available to assist local charities or community organisations that could benefit.

8.2.2 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>

8.2.3 Developer Contributions / s106 Funding projects

Community Officers have worked with external groups and colleagues in the Planning Department in the potential utilisation developer contributions and other sources of capital funding available.

Pirton Parish Council – Environmental Enhancements to Toot Hill

- The Parish Council has been successful in seeking approval to formally utilise UU contributions collated under Informal Open Space to the sum of £1,295 to help undertake various enhancements to the open space within the village known as Toot Hill over the next couple of years and as recommended by Countryside Management Services.

Gt Offley – Cricket Pavilion

- The Parish Council has been successful in seeking approval to formally utilise s106 contributions related to the Croudace development to the sum of £4,800 to help renew the roof of the Cricket Pavilion.

Kimpton Parish Council - Enhancements to The Green

- The Parish Council has been successful in seeking approval to formally utilise s106 & UU contributions collated under Informal Open Space to the sum of £4,637.37 to help undertake various enhancements to the open space within the village known the Green.

Preston Parish Council - Village Hall

- Advice & support is being given to the Parish Council re the drawing down of s106 / UUs funds to assist with costs related to improving access to the front of the Village Hall.

If members have any projects in mind which may potentially benefit from utilising capital funds derived via the Planning process 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 preparation & 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

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) of the Constitution 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 The budget carried forward from the 2017/18 Development budgets was £3,724. The balance remaining from the 2017/18 ward member budgets of £1,806 has been added to the Development carry forward budget so that the total carry forward funding is £5,530. The funding allocated so far this financial year, totalling £4661, has been drawn from the carry over amount, leaving £869 to be used up from last year’s budget.

In addition the £400 allocated to Hexton Community Petanque Project is recommended to be reallocated for use for other local projects. This will leave £1,269 available from 2017/18 budget. The Development budget for 2018/19 is £8,400 (including £1,000 added to the budget from Members Allowances).

In total the amount of funding available for allocation is £9,669 in the Development Budget and £3,900 split between Ward Members who have £390 allocated for eligible groups & projects within their respective Wards.

Development Budget	£
2017/18 C/fwd	3,724
2017/18 Member Ward budget c/fwd	1,806
Total Carry forward budget	5,530
Grant funding allocated to date 2018/19	-4,661
2017/18 c/fwd budget for allocation	869
Transfer of funds allocated to Hexton Community Pentanque Project (to be agreed)	400
2018/19 Budget	8,400
Total Development Budget for allocation	9,669
Member Ward Budget 2018/19	3,900

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 a positive impact on the community and wider environment. The projects outlined in this report seek to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between all members of the community.

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 – Southern Rural Area Committee Budget Sheet 2017/18

16. CONTACT OFFICERS

- 16.1 Author: Claire Morgan, Senior Communities Officer
Email: claire.morgan@north-herts.gov.uk

- 16.2 Contributors: Anne Miller, Assistant Accountant
Email: anne.miller@north-herts.gov.uk

Kerry Shorrocks, Corporate Human Resources Manager
Email: Kerry.shorrocks@north-herts.gov.uk

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

Reuben Ayavoo, Senior Policy Officer
Email: reuben.ayavoo@north-herts.gov.uk

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

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