

**LETCHWORTH COMMITTEE  
7 SEPTEMBER 2017**

**\*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

**AGENDA ITEM No.**

**7**

**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 14<sup>th</sup> 2016.
- 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 endorses the actions taken by the Community Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being for Letchworth.

**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 Letchworth Area Committee Budget Spread sheet, which relates to the Area Committee budget balances for 2017/18.
- 7.2 The spreadsheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial years, including balances and past expenditure relating to the allocated and unallocated Area Capital Visioning Budgets available to the Committee.

#### **8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS**

##### **8.1 Update on Community Engagement**

###### **8.1.1 North Herts Minority Ethnic Forum**

The North Herts Minority Ethnic Forum based in Hitchin at Unity House on Winbush Road is planning to extend the premises to the rear in order to have more space and increase participation.

The Communities Officer has been liaising with their chief executive in order to advice on suitable funding streams to assist with the project.

She also facilitated a meeting between the NHMEF and Howard Cottage Housing Association who are the landlords of the building in order to get their agreement for the work to take place.

#### 8.1.2 Jackie's Drop In

The Communities Officer has coordinated intensive work with the volunteers at Jackie's Drop In. Following their move to the new location on Broadway, they had doubled their operation and to continue the growth and sustainability of the organisation needed to formalise their governance and structure.

The Communities Team have been very fortunate to have a volunteer Laura Levy working with them who formerly worked in the banking industry and has experience of business management. Laura was able to spend a considerable amount of time with the JDI volunteers assisting in the production of business plan and helping them to understand the process of planning and setting goals and objectives.

NHCVS have also provided a great deal of assistance to the group by advising on their Policies and Procedures and supporting the creation of a formal governing body with a chair, secretary and treasurer. This group should now be meeting regularly and recording their meetings.

All of these issues needed to be urgently dealt with in order that JDI be eligible to apply for larger pots of funding necessary to maintain the future of their services and also begin to employ some of the key volunteers involved from the inception of the centre.

The group will need to continue to plan for the future, keep the policies up to date with latest legislation and take responsibility to grow and develop their services.

Both officers and staff at NHCVS will be on hand to advise and support the group. However, it will not be possible to continue the level of support that the group has received over the past few months.

It is hoped that now the governing body has been set up that they will be able to take full responsibility to competently and efficiently manage the centre and the services it provides.

#### 8.1.3 Waste & Recycling Survey

The Authority has received over 6500 responses from the Waste & Recycling Survey, across East and North Herts residents. The majority of these are via social media. The results of the survey will be analysed and collated in advance of Cabinet meeting in October.

#### 8.1.4 Letchworth Festival

The Letchworth Festival fortnight was very well received again this summer. The steering committee has seen quite a few changes this year with a new Chair and many new committee members. The festival Finale 'Prom's in the Park' benefitted from some funding from Area Committee Budgets providing £1500 towards staging for the event.

The Communities Officer has met with the current Chair of the Festival, Akua Obeng-Frimpong who has lots of ideas to develop the festival next year. The new committee intends to actively encourage young people and those from the many diverse cultures and backgrounds in the town to organise events next year as part of the festival.

The communities' officer has provided relevant contacts to liaise with and will continue to provide advice and guidance.

## 8.2 Update on previous grants awarded

### 8.2.1 Howard Garden Social Centre

The Howard Garden Social Centre received funding from the Letchworth Committee in September 2016 towards the cost of replacement of the flooring following flooding.

The Social Centre no longer benefits from annual funding from North Hertfordshire District Council.

They currently receive an annual grant from Hertfordshire County Council of £9800 and this year has received smaller grants from both the Co-op and the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation. They have increased their evening room hire by 30% and are organising regular fund raising events.

The next fund raising event is to be held on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2017 and a Christmas Bazaar is planned for later in the year.

They are still looking to recruit a new Chairperson for the Board of Trustees and new volunteers would be made very welcome.

## 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 Terms of Reference in relation to Area Committees confirm that they may establish and maintain relationships with outside bodies/voluntary organisations which include discretionary grant aid/financial support but excluding grants for district-wide activities. The Committee has delegated powers, as a body, 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.

9.2 Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides a General Power of Competence which gives local authorities the powers to do anything:-

- An individual may generally do
- Anywhere in the UK or elsewhere
- For a commercial purpose or otherwise, for a charge or without a charge
- Without the need to demonstrate that it will benefit the authority, its area or person's resident or present in its area.

9.3 Section 137 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 for the 2016/17 financial year was £19,500. Within the previous financial year the committee provided grant funding of £16,308 leaving a carry over amount of £3,192. At the last meeting in July 2017 a further £1,113 was allocated and spent leaving an amount of £1,229 still outstanding in the carry over budget.

As outlined in Appendix 1; the discretionary grant budget for this year is £19,500 therefore providing a total of £20,729 available to provide grant funding to eligible groups and organisations.

Any grant funding will be utilised from the 2016/17 carry over amounts in the first instance.

The total amount of grant funding spent this financial year is £3,350 which has been taken will be taken from the 2016/17 carry over amount leaving £1,229 from this budget and the 2017/18 budget has not yet been used.

## **11. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 There are no relevant risk entries that have been recorded on Covalent, 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 All projects that are assigned area committee funding are assessed to ensure that they do not negatively impact on any part of the local community. The only deviation to this is where a minority or marginalised group may specifically receive funding or allocation of resources to address a particular area of need or 'gap' in provision.

## **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 1 - 2017/18 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