

SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE
10 OCTOBER 2019

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

TITLE OF REPORT: GRANTS & COMMUNITY UPDATE

REPORT OF THE POLICY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

COUNCIL 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 Committee Grant budgets.
- 1.2 To bring to the Committee's attention details of recent requests received for 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 Engagement officers have been involved in.
- 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 £389.00 to Offley Village Hall for the purchase and transport of a Christmas Tree and provision of a children's disco as outlined in 8.1.1 (Attractive and Thriving, Prosper and Protect)
- 2.3 £1,500 to Wymondley Baptist Church to convert existing toilets so that they are accessible to wheelchair users and those with mobility issues as outlined in 8.1.2 (Attractive and Thriving, Prosper and Protect, Responsive and Efficient)
- 2.4 Members discretionary budgets are currently £280 per councillor in total this amounts to £2,800. If members are minded these funds could be included within the Base budget of £5,900 as outlined under item 10 financial implications
- 2.5 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 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 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 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 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. Under the current grant criteria there is no upper limit outlined for the amount of grant funding to be allocated which can be decided at the Committee's discretion.

- 7.2 Members are asked to note the information detailed in Appendix 1. Southern Rural Committee Budget Spread sheet, which relates to the Area Committee budget balances for 2019/20. 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

Applicant	Offley Village Hall
Project	Christmas tree and Disco
Sum requested	£389.00
Total project cost	£555.00
Match funding	£166.00 from 50/50 from Offley Parish Council and Village Hall reserves.
6th months expenditure	£3,269
Funds held	£5000
Previous support	£300 June 2017
NHDC Policy met	Yes
Strategic objective met	Attractive & Thriving and Prosper & Protect

Offley Village Hall volunteers are requesting £389 for the purchase/delivery of a Christmas Tree and the provision of a free disco for children from the local area. The Christmas Tree will be viewed by hundreds of passers by and the villagers of Offley. It will be lit from mid December 2019 until mid January 2020. The children's disco will take place 7 days before Christmas. The village hall plan to charge £5 per adult for access to the disco/party – by doing this last year they raised £158 which they donated to NSPCC and Offley School.

8.1.2

Applicant	Wymondley Baptist Church
Project	Accessible disabled toilets
Sum requested	£1500
Total project cost	£4995
Match funding	£750
Annual expenditure	£24,917.75
Funds held	£12,529.03
Previous support	None
NHDC Policy met	Yes
Strategic objective met	Attractive and Thriving, Prosper and Protect, Responsive and Efficient.

Wymondley Baptist Church is a place of worship but also a community hub. All users of the church hall from across the community will benefit from the conversion of the toilets. This includes; members of the activity club for elderly and lonely local people, the retired men's group, community Pilates, table tennis, gardening, drama groups and also families who attend church services. It will benefit voters when the church is used as a polling station and village residents that use the church hall for private functions.

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 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 1 Committee budget 2019/20

There are carry over amounts from 2018/19 are £5,421 and the allocation for 2019/20 is £5,900 in addition to £2,800 Member ward budgets.

As outlined under recommendation 2.4 officers suggest that the £2,800 assigned to ward member's budgets be added to the £5,900 Development budget in order for the budget sheets to more clearly express the funds available.

The carry over amounts from 2018/19 which include carry over from the ward member discretionary budgets equate to £5,421 in total the amount of funding available for allocation is £14,121.

The grants requested within this report equate to £1,889 if both are agreed the remaining amount will be £12,232 to be spent at the remaining two meetings this financial year.

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" 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 - 2019/20 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.