

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 24 JUNE 2014

REPORT BY EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HEALTH, HOUSING AND  
COMMUNITY SUPPORT

UPDATE ON COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAMME

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

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**Purpose/Summary of Report**

- This is an update and review of grant allocations for the period 1 October 2013 to 31 March 2014.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMUNITY SCRUTINY:**

**That:**

<b>(A)</b>	<b>the Committee notes the progress being made by Officers to allocate grants according to agreed policies; and</b>
<b>(B)</b>	<b>Members support a proposed change in the reporting requirements for grants (ref paragraph 2.1) to an annual review to coincide with the grant giving cycle with the option of a midyear report if requested.</b>

1.0 Background

1.1 Following a resolution by the Executive in 2012, it was agreed that Community Scrutiny would receive twice-yearly reports on community grant allocations. The purpose of community grants is to help take forward the Council's aims in people, place and prosperity. This is typically for non-statutory activities such as health and well-being, improved parks and open spaces and increased economic and social activities in the community.

1.2 The Council's discretionary grants programme, under the Community Engagement and Partnerships team, not only takes forward service priorities of enabling sports, arts and community

providers to improve their cultural offer but also supports priorities in the East Herts Together Sustainable Community Strategy (2009 – 2024) and related documents such as the new East Herts Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2013-2018).

1.3 This is the second report for the 2013/14 year and focuses on grants allocated between 1 October 2013 and 31 March 2014.

1.4 Members are asked to note that the total community capital budget available for allocation in 2013/2014 was £90,000. An additional £21,096 became available for reallocation when the grant projects could not go ahead. This was approved through the Health Check process.

1.5 The total revenue budget available for allocation in 2013/2014 year was £58,390. This includes an unspent amount from the Councillor Engagement grants pot that was carried forward from 2012/13.

## 2.0 Report

2.1 It is proposed to change the reporting requirement for grants to an annual update that coincides with the grant giving cycle. The option to receive a midyear report would remain.

2.2 During the second half of the 2013/14 financial year, 54 capital and revenue grants were awarded.

<b>Theme</b>	<b>No. of requests</b>	<b>No. of grants awarded</b>	<b>Budget allocated</b>
Small Community Activities – 3 <sup>rd</sup> round	18	10	£3,678
Small Community Activities – 4 <sup>th</sup> round	15	11	£5,238
Small Community Activities – 5 <sup>th</sup> round	16	11	£4,308
Performance for Excellence	11	10	£1,650
Community Capital 2 <sup>nd</sup> round – rural & town	19	12	£51,207
<b>Total</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>£66,081</b>

2.3 This brings the total allocation of capital monies through the Council's discretionary grants programme to £111,096 (£51,207

plus £59,889 in the first half of the year), awarded to 24 organisations.

2.4 The total allocation of revenue grant monies was £56,908 (£14,874 plus £42,034 in the first half of the year), awarded to 68 organisations.

2.5 The Council's preference in grant giving is to areas that have received little or no New Homes Bonus (NHB) money. As all five towns have been passed significant funds through the building of new houses, the Council's policy is to first fund projects in the rural areas. Projects in the towns may be considered later in the year if the budget is unspent. Please note this policy only relates to the Community Capital Grant Scheme.

2.6 As part of the application process, all organisations are expected to approach their parish or town council for funding.

2.7 All applicants for a grant are also required to obtain an endorsement for their project from their Ward Councillor. This provides an opportunity for Members to engage with volunteers who are providing support such as health and social care, leisure, recreational and other services to residents in their ward. Members are asked to be sure that they only endorse projects that are for residents living in their ward.

2.8 The next section of the report addresses each area of funding in more detail.

## **2.9 Small Community "Activities" Grants**

2.10 In the second half of the year, 32 grants were awarded or conditionally awarded. The total number of grants awarded in 2013/14 was 68 (36 from the first half of the year). The maximum grant available is £500.

2.11 The budget of £29,290 was oversubscribed by £11,342 so Officers only recommended grant-aiding those organisations that most clearly contributed to Council priorities.

2.12 Of the 68 projects/activities funded, 29 (43%) supported older or vulnerable people and helped combat loneliness and isolation by supporting community networks and enabling friendships. It is estimated that more than 2,000 individuals benefitted from the

## Community Activities Grants pot.

2.13 A full list of grants can be found on [www.eastherts.gov.uk/grants](http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/grants) and - from the second half of the year – includes such groups as: River Beane Restoration Association, Stanstead Abbots and District Evergreen Club, Hertford Disability Support Group, Buntingford Carnival, and Kickstart Trust in Bishop's Stortford.

2.14 The type of organisations receiving support is shown below:

Grass roots groups	33
Housing Association and Sheltered Housing Residents Associations	4
Sports Clubs	5
Registered Charities	22
Parish Council	1
Councillor Engagement	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>

2.15 Grant support across the district was broken down as follows:

Bishop's Stortford	20
Buntingford	5
Hertford	9
Sawbridgeworth	5
Ware	6
Rural	21
District wide	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>

2.16 More than half of the Community Activities pot was allocated to organisations that are reliant on volunteers to raise funds and deliver activities. Notably, more than half of awards made were to organisations that had never applied to the Council before for a grant.

2.17 As stated in 2.11, this pot was oversubscribed so not all requests for funding were approved. The reasons for this were varied but ranged from: the application was incomplete, the organisation had already received a revenue grant from the Council or the activity/organisation was not a priority/not in financial need. Organisations that have little capacity to generate income or raise funds have priority.

2.18 Ninety-two applications for project/running costs were submitted to the Council and 68 were awarded a grant resulting in a 74% success rate.

2.19 Seven grants were awarded to groups delivering projects that improved sports provision, such as Anstey Carpet Bowls and Buntingford Cougars. These allocations contribute to a service priority of enabling sports and arts providers and other community groups to improve their cultural offer.

2.20 Grant giving in this area also contributes to the task of building resilient communities where the local authority works in partnerships with local communities and other agencies to encourage volunteering (social capital) and building on communities' own strengths and assets.

### 2.21 **Performance to Excellence Grants (Sports and Arts)**

2.22 In the second half of the year, 10 young people between the ages of 11 to 18 were awarded a grant. In total, 21 grants were awarded for such sports as tennis, carriage driving and badminton and the entire budget of £4,100 allocated. Forty-three percent were first-time applicants not previously funded. A breakdown of where applications came from is shown below:

Bishop's Stortford	8
Buntingford	0
Hertford	3
Sawbridgeworth	0
Ware	7
Rural	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>

2.23 This year saw an increase of applications from Bishop's Stortford. Measures will be put in place to encourage applications from Buntingford and Sawbridgeworth and the villages.

2.24 The success rate for this scheme is 95%. In line with other schemes, all applicants are now expected to contact their local Ward Councillor for an endorsement of their application.

2.25 Members are asked to note that this grant pot supports exceptional sporting talent and it is not unusual for the Council to support a young athlete over several years as many continue to develop and go on from county level to national and sometimes international competitions.

## 2.26 Community Capital (Large and Small)

2.27 In the second half of the year, the Council awarded 12 grants to projects in rural/urban areas of East Herts. Since this pot was oversubscribed, Officers assessed each application to identify those that most closely met the Council's strategic objectives and would have the most impact on the community.

2.28 As per policy, Officers deferred applications for projects in the towns until after consideration of rural applications.

2.29 A full list of all 24 awards is on [www.eastherts.gov.uk/grants](http://www.eastherts.gov.uk/grants) and includes awards to Allen's Green Association, Bishop's Stortford Sports Trust, Friends of Rib Valley Schools and Watton-at-Stone Cricket Club. The total amount allocated this year was £111,096. Officers were able to allocate grants over the initial budget by reusing funds from grant projects that did not go ahead.

2.30 The Council received requests totalling £137,388 from an initial budget of £90,000.

2.31 A total breakdown of successful recipients is shown below:

Parish Councils	4
Voluntary-led fundraising groups/grass roots organisations	5
Churches	1
Village Hall Management Committees	4
Registered Charities/Environmental Trusts	6
Sports Clubs	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>

2.32 Success rate was 72%. Requests for grants were turned down either because applications were incomplete, the project was not a priority for the Council, there was not enough evidence of need or the organisation had already received a capital grant from the Council in 2013/14.

2.33 Members might like to know that nine grants (£35,771) were awarded to organisations that delivered sports or recreational activities. The Council's grants helped ensure easier access to a building or purchased new sports equipment.

2.34 More than half of awards made were to organisations that had never applied for a grant before. From information provided in

applications, it is estimated that more than 30,000 people benefitted from this pot.

## 2.35 **Monitoring and Feedback**

2.36 Since 2010, applicants have been required to submit a monitoring form detailing the outcomes of grant award. The following is a selection of feedback received.

*“The new mowers have been invaluable in helping the Reserve team and volunteers manage a range of grassland reserves. This is providing a long term sustainable solution .....offers opportunities for learning new skills for our trainees and also frees up valuable time for our staff, trainees and volunteers to carry out vital conservation activities.”* **Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust**

*“We held a charity fund-raising event at Great Amwell Parish Hall for Singing for the Brain..... which was attended by 70 people and we’re pleased to say that we raised £400. As a result of running this event, it has made our members and guests aware of this charity, set up to benefit people with Alzheimer’s, something more likely to be relative to our age group Without the use of the PA system it would have been more difficult for our chairlady and the event organizer to be heard so clearly amongst an enthusiastically chatty group .... the PA system is a very useful asset.”* **Great Amwell Women’s Club**

*“Your generosity is greatly appreciated. We will be using this money to pay for our Advertising and Marketing campaign and other items that we have listed in our application. We are such a small organisation and we rarely apply or request funding from any big companies. This is mainly because we are Volunteers and we are not set up nor neither do we run in the mainstream of larger charities. We are proud to be self-funded and we work extremely hard to work within our small budgets from the small income that we get from our fortnightly sessions.”* **Ware Toy Library**

## 3.0 **Grant to Local Giving charity**

3.1 To date, there are 16 organisations in East Herts that are now fund raising on line through [www.Localgiving.com](http://www.Localgiving.com) – as a result of a free subscription to the site from East Herts Council. Another seven are currently in the process of registering and building their webpages.

3.2 The purpose of this initiative is to encourage voluntary and community groups to explore other ways to raise money, awareness and support online, thus helping reduce their dependence on grants. All groups requesting a grant from the Council and awarded a grant are informed about this opportunity.

#### **4.0 External/other sources of Funding (East Herts Fund for the Future – EHF4F)**

- 4.1 Members may recall that at the 19 November 2013 meeting, it was recommended that the Council explore the implications of closer Member involvement with the EHF4F and look closely at the financial and legal issues.
- 4.2 Following a meeting of senior officers, a report was submitted to the Executive. In May 2014, the Executive agreed a recommendation proposing that a new operating partnership between East Herts Council and the Hertfordshire Community Foundation be established. This partnership ensures a closer involvement of the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council to aid in fundraising and assessment of grants.

#### **5.0 Marketing/Publicity**

- 5.1 In the last half of 13/14 financial year, uptake from the media in regards to local grants was positive. In the period September 2013 to March 2014, three press releases relating to grants were sent out and picked up online as well as on social media, with two of them being used in the relevant papers, giving a publication rate of 66%.”
- 5.2 Information about the availability of grants was posted on the Council’s website and other partners’ websites. Members were informed about the various funding rounds via Members Information Bulletin and dedicated emails.
- 5.3 Link Magazine featured grant recipient Ardeley Leisure Club on its front page in the Autumn 2013 issue and highlighted the achievements of young athletes who were awarded Performance to Excellence grants.
- 5.4 The fact that more than half of the applications received were from organisations that had not applied before demonstrates that the Council’s communications strategy is working.



## 6.0 Implications/Consultations

6.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

### Background Papers

None.

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