

**CHILTERN DISTRICT COUNCIL
CABINET – 17 DECEMBER 2013**

Background Papers, if any, are specified at the end of the Report

**REVITALISATION GROUPS – ANNUAL REVIEW & CAPITAL
GRANT AWARDS 2013/14**

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RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet formally recognises and acknowledges Chiltern's Revitalisation Groups' contributions to improving local services and facilities across the District.

To transfer £16,000 from the Provisional List to the Approved and Committed capital programme and utilise the funding to support Chiltern's Revitalisation Groups detailed below:

- **£4,000 to Chalfont St Peter Community Appraisal Group**
- **£4,000 to Chalfont St Giles Revitalisation Committee**
- **£4,000 to Little Chalfont Community Association**
- **£4,000 to Chesham Action Partnership**
- **The decision to fund Amersham Old Town Community Revitalisation Group be deferred until 2014/15**

Relationship to Council Objectives

Objective 2 – Safe, healthy and cohesive community

A – Promote healthy living, well-being and address health inequalities

C – Promote community safety and work with partners to reduce anti-social behaviour in the district

E – Develop closer working and community capacity within towns, parishes and local neighbourhoods and enable people to influence decisions affecting their local area

F – Build capacity in the voluntary sector

G – Support the development and inclusion of younger people in society.

J – Promote community cohesion

Objective 3 – Conserve the environment and promote sustainability

A – Protect the Green Belt, conserve the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and enhance the environment

D – Support the health and vitality of Chiltern's economy

Implications

(i) This is not a key decision within the forward plan.

(ii) It is within the policy and budgetary framework

Financial Implications

The proposed grant funding award of £16,000 will support and stimulate the delivery of five local community led capital projects

Risk Implications

Given the proactive role the Council has played in supporting all the proposed projects there is an opportunity that a relatively small contribution would secure the projects and demonstrate the ability of the community to deliver against identified priorities in the community appraisals.

Issues relating to the overall management of the project, insurance and future maintenance would be the responsibility of each Revitalisation Group and would have to be confirmed in writing before any grant is awarded by Chiltern District Council

Equalities Implications

Chiltern's Revitalisation Groups represent a broad and diverse cross section of the communities they serve and all projects are subject to in depth local consultation to truly demonstrate community need. The equality impact assessment for community cohesion recognises the importance of supporting community and voluntary organisations with advice, funding, support and assistance to enable them to engage, network, consult and participate in improving the quality of life for local residents.

Sustainability Implications

All the proposed community schemes have been identified through formal community appraisal processes. Each is led or supported by local Revitalisation Groups which with the support of appropriate local community organisations will deliver the projects independently of Chiltern District Council. Community empowerment is being harnessed to deliver several community led initiatives within Chiltern. By positively supporting these projects encouragement will be given to other community led initiatives.

Introduction

- 1 Revitalisation Groups are community led, seek to be fully representative of the towns and villages they serve and act independently of all local authorities. They have proven to be invaluable in identifying the complex range of local needs in the towns and villages. Each group works alongside its respective town and parish councils, Chiltern District Council and Buckinghamshire County Council; service providers including health and police, residents groups, faith groups, younger and older people, and local businesses and traders. A strong working partnership is now well established between the Revitalisation Groups and the Council which has helped

enable local communities consult on a range of community planning issues and service delivery, including the Core Strategy, including Chiltern and South Bucks Sustainable Community Strategy, Delivery Development Plan Document, Open Space and Recreational Strategy.

- 2 Since their creation in the 1990's by this Council the Revitalisation Groups have continued to flourish helping improve local services and facilities across the district.

Outcomes Achieved During 2013

- 3 **Improved services and facilities** – Chiltern District Council provides a small annual grant of £2,000 for each group to act as a catalyst to support a range of local projects relevant to the needs of each locality. The key outcomes achieved during 2013 demonstrate the excellent return the Council receives for its investment. A range of successful projects have been delivered, contributing to the economic vitality of town and village centres, improving the local environment and helping to create safer communities. Several examples from each group are detailed below:

- I. **Amersham** - provision of floral planters to help enhance town centre; the 1st Amersham Town Show 2013; & celebrations to coincide with the 150th anniversary of the Metropolitan Railway; support for town centre cycle routes & the GLL / Chiltern Pools Play Day;
- II. **Amersham Old Town** – a thriving action group which provides healthy exercise and activities for particularly isolated elderly people; a new residents association for the community of Gore Hill; a new play area for isolated children, spring bulb planting across the town and small grants to youth groups;
- III. **Chesham** - Business, retail and community networking to encourage responsible business practice and a sustainable community; providing small grants to projects which support younger people, older people, families and vulnerable people in Chesham; opportunities to promote young business entrepreneurs; Christmas markets & a Town festival;
- IV. **Chalfont St Giles** – further improvements to the River Misborne pathway to improve access for residents and visitors; an important Literary Festival which drew visitors from across the region; the community run library and visitors centre; and the refurbishment of the Jordans Village play area;

- V. **Chalfont St Peter** – heritage walks, a local history project and website; the regeneration of Church Lane to improve the streetscape; continued support for the river side walk and the community library; a vibrant older people action group; and effective action groups for local transport, community safety and heritage.
- VI. **Great Missenden Parish** – small grants to support local youth organisations, after school activities church and local environmental projects; the group continues to be our critical friend in terms of local planning process; and is support of the new and emerging Prestwood Village Association.
- VII. **Little Chalfont Community Association** - moving forward with plans for a community centre; village day; floral decorations and Christmas lights, Small Business Saturday on 7th December.

4 **A Positive Image of Chiltern District Council** - As demonstrated by the quotations below, the Revitalisation Groups have a strong appreciation for the role that Chiltern District Council plays in supporting their work to deliver high quality community projects.

- *“Seed funding is essential to convince the group it is valued by the Council”*
- *“Our group is the sole organisation which draws together representation from voluntary organisations, business and all the councils with a common objective”*
- *“The Revitalisation groups act as an assessor of particular needs within our community and a conduit of how to address them”*

Capital Funding Bids Support

5 In addition to the smaller community projects the Revitalisation Groups also have a strong track record of developing larger capital projects. Over recent years these have focused on the regeneration of the town and village High Streets regenerating town/village centres and re-establishing parks/open space and play areas. All seven of the Revitalisation Groups were invited to consider if their large scale projects would benefit from the support of the Council. Subsequently, expressions of interest were received from five groups. Namely: Chalfont St Peter, Chalfont St Giles, Old Amersham, Little Chalfont and Chesham.

6 The provisional but not yet committed and approved capital programme currently has an allocation of £16,000 ring-fenced to support those Revitalisation Groups which are leading or supporting complex large

scale projects in their respective towns and villages. These projects are costing a minimum of £60,000 and some will be in excess of £100,000. All of them will require substantial amounts of external funding. There is strong evidence to suggest that financial support from the Council helps these large scale projects to lever in additional grants from regional and national funders such as The Woodland Trust, Veolia Environmental Trust, and Awards for All.

(a) Chalfont St Giles Revitalisation Committee – CSG Youth Club Project

A new, fully accessible building will provide an all year round programme of activities for all ages. It will be the only facility in the Three Households part of the village that will have the space to provide a varied programme of activities for the whole community. In a local survey 95% of those asked said it was a much need facility for the whole community and this is further endorsed by the new draft Open Space & Recreational Strategy. A key target group will be vulnerable people.

The present building was built in the 1950's and consists of a main hall and smaller adjacent spaces with a kitchen. With the new building providing much needed additional space the community run youth club intends to provide youth arts and a family education centre.

The club will be able to provide more varied activities for disadvantaged young people. This will help to further decrease anti-social behaviour within the village and surrounding areas. The current memberships of young people are committed to the project, and have raised over £10,000 by taking their youth dance group out for performances to the public in and around Buckinghamshire and at the same time acting as youth ambassadors for Chalfont St Giles.

The club plans to include: the elderly of the village by providing programmes to promote wellbeing; social activities to address isolation and; to bring together the young and the elderly in activities and so help to bridge the age gap between them.

Full planning permission was granted in 2012. Funding bids are currently being considered by the Parish Council, Children in Need, Awards for All, etc. The total project cost is estimated in excess of £100,000.

A grant of £4,000 is recommended.

(b) Chalfont St Peter Community Appraisal Group – CSP Youth Club Project

The existing sports court is over forty years old and needs updating. This outdoor space is critical to the club's youth work because it is

integral to their offer to the young people in the village. It is fully utilised in the evenings by club members and during the day by pre-school children and local schools.

The annual estimate for footfall is 27,660.

The new court will provide a safe and attractive facility for young people and the whole community. The project brief includes landscaping and resurfacing of the car park. The intention is to also enhance the facilities so there is improved access for users with disabilities.

The project plan delivery process is providing young people with opportunities to develop their project management skills. A project group has been formed to consult with the wider community, to develop the plans for refurbishment; write grant applications and raise funds.

There is evidence already of local support for the project from stakeholders including the Parish Council, churches, schools and the young people themselves.

Funding has already been secured from a range of providers including Veolia, The Shanley Foundation, Youth Bank, the Parish Council, and the police amongst others. The total project cost is estimated in excess of £100,000.

A grant of £4,000 is recommended.

**(c) Chesham Action Partnership – Community Hub Project
“Core Chesham”**

The new home for Core Chesham was officially opened at 15a East Street on 2nd November after a successful campaign to raise £20,000 to kick start the venture. This project aims to help revitalise Chesham's High Street by providing opportunities for new small businesses and improving the town centre's offer to visitors.

An internet media station will be the first new business to operate from the hub. It will be run primarily by volunteers connecting with other media organisations serving Chesham offering education, enabling the community to use the internet media station and advertising. Young entrepreneurs will be able to run start-up businesses or pop-up shops from the building and there is also a meeting room for volunteer groups to use. Core Chesham, will also offer space for volunteers to meet, and space for emerging businesses.

The project's volunteer board has negotiated rent free use of the building for the first six months. The South Buckinghamshire Credit Union is also negotiating for a contact point. Tourist and business visitor information will be made available.

Needs were first identified in the “Chesham Community Vision” an action plan supported by Chiltern District Council which recommends solutions to the challenges facing the town. The Core Chesham project aims; to provide the mechanisms to meet these challenges, to revitalise the High Street, to promote wider community cohesion, to create the sense of a connected town, to create a high street customer facing presence and provide a shop window for small creative businesses.

Small community grants to help prepare the legal framework and set up costs have been provided by Buckinghamshire County Council and Chiltern District Council. However, further external funding is required to fit out the building, provide serviceable furniture, communications, media and other technical equipment. However, as much of this will be provided pro-bono by volunteers and supporters the total project cost is expected to be less than £60,000.

A grant of £4,000 is recommended.

(d) Amersham Old Town Community Revitalisation Group - Footpath Project

There is one project remaining on the Market Town Health Check and community appraisal which is important to the Old Town. The Misbourne footpath from the pedestrian bridge behind Tesco travelling west towards Rectory Hill is a popular walk with elderly residents, families and visitors. It is generally known as “The Town Walk”. However, in adverse weather conditions long stretches become a muddy track.

A solution to the problem was first requested by residents during the town’s health check consultation process, and the issue continues as a subject of discussion between residents and local councillors.

Project management to find a sustainable solution will be provided by the Revitalisation Group working with community volunteers, BCC Right of Way Officer, the Chiltern Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty CAONB, and other stakeholders.

Once the project brief has been fully finalised and agreed, funding bids will be made to the Chiltern Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (CAONB), Bucks County Council, Awards for All, and Amersham Town Council. The total project cost is estimated to be less than £60,000.

As the project is in the early stages of development the decision for funding be deferred and considered in the next financial year (2014/15) is recommended.

(e) Little Chalfont Community Association - Nature Park

The nature park will provide a tranquil area close to the village centre for the whole community to enjoy. The entrance is opposite the village library, off the access road into Dr Challoners School. It is hoped that the park will attract residents and visitors as well as encourage increased levels of physical and social activities. Given the locality of the park it is also envisaged that it will support the economic vitality of the village and encourage more visits to the library.

The park will provide young children's play and exercise equipment to encourage fitness and healthy active living. There will also be some provision for people with disabilities. Pathways are to be designed for access by visitors who are wheelchair users. It is also intended to have raised beds with sensory planting, and to consider providing audio guides for visitors who have impaired vision. Dr Challoners School is welcoming the park as an important resource.

The project commenced in 2011 with fundraising activities. Significantly, £174,000 was raised by public donations following a public appeal. Grants have been received from the Parish Council and Buckinghamshire County Council. Further funding bids will be made to Heritage Lottery, Biffa, and the Woodland Trust.

The planning and design stage is almost complete. Public consultation events to look closely at the designs commenced in November. Little Chalfont Parish Council is supportive of the project and has agreed, in principle, to take responsibility for management and maintenance.

The total project cost is estimated at between £180,000 and £200,000.

The specific item for which funding is being requested from the Council is "educational signage" totalling £4,600.

A grant of £4,000 is recommended.

Conclusion

- 7 The Revitalisation Groups' smaller projects contribute to a number of the Council's key objectives in relation to supporting the local economy, improving the local environment and empowering local communities. The projects delivered in 2013 also support a range of key local strategies including Chiltern and South Bucks Sustainable Community Strategy, Health & Well-being Strategy and Community Safety Partnership Plan representing an excellent return on investment.
- 8 The proposed financial support of £16,000 to enable the four capital projects in Chalfont St Peter, Chalfont St Giles, Chesham and Little Chalfont will enhance the local environment; support the provision of

new community assets; encourage an uplift to the local economy; and attract investment of close to £500,000 into the District.

Background Papers: None
