

SUBJECT:	<i>Chiltern Revitalisation Groups Capital Grant Request 2015 - 2016</i>
REPORT OF:	<i>Councillor Graham Harris – Cabinet Member for Community, Health & Housing</i>
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	<i>Martin Holt – Head of Healthy Communities</i>
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WARD/S AFFECTED	<i>All</i>

1. Purpose of Report

Recommendation

1.1 It is proposed that £16,000 from the provisional capital programme be transferred to the approved capital programme and used to support Chiltern's Revitalisation Group capital projects detailed below and shown in Appendix 2:

- (a) Chesham - Improvements to High Street Amenity Signage (£3,500)
- (b) Amersham on the Hill - Community Area Plantation Road / Roundwood Road (£4,000)
- (c) Amersham Town - Space for All (£3,500)
- (d) Little Chalfont – Improvements to Pedestrian Underpass (£4,000)
- (e) Chalfont St Peter – High Street Hanging Baskets (£1,000)

1.2 All awards will be subject to planning consent if required; and confirmation that ongoing maintenance & insurance obligations will not be the responsibility of the Council.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

2.1 Chiltern's Revitalisation groups play a key role in helping improve services and facilities in communities across Chiltern. All the groups have a strong track record of enabling community participation allowing residents to shape and improve their own community. The proposed £16,000 grant will also help lever in significant new funding totalling £105,000 into Chiltern.

3. Content of Report

3.1 Chiltern's seven revitalisation groups are independent voluntary organisations that work collaboratively alongside all three tiers of local government.

3.2 This Council has supported these groups since their creation in the 1990s. The groups function by encouraging and enabling local residents to actively become involved in determining local priorities, improving local services and developing

community facilities They all encourage volunteering; they work with partner agencies; devise local action plans; and raise funding for their local projects.

- 3.3 Each revitalisation group receives an annual grant of £2,000 from the Council. The grant is used to support local small scale projects and to lever in external funding for large scale multi agency projects which aim to maintain, or enhance local services and facilities, or to create new ones. All projects contribute to social, community or economic development; protect and or enhance the environment; and or improve the health and wellbeing of residents. Several examples from each group are detailed in Appendix 1.
- 3.4 In addition to smaller community projects the revitalisation groups also have a proven track record in delivering larger capital projects. In recent years these have focussed on the regeneration of the town centres and village high streets. To support this work all seven groups were invited to consider if the Council might support these large scale projects. Subsequently, expressions of interest were received from the groups serving Chesham, Amersham on the Hill, Amersham Town, Little Chalfont and Chalfont St Peter. These projects are detailed in Appendix 2.

4 Consultation

- 4.1 Crucially, each group works to ensure it is fully representative of the community it serves. Representatives on each group include residents associations, faith groups, youth clubs, older people action groups, museum and heritage organisations, voluntary leisure, sports and arts clubs; conservation areas, and environment groups. Service providers, including the police, regularly attend revitalisation group committee meetings.
- 4.2 Each Revitalisation group undertakes extensive consultation with residents and other key stakeholders in order to develop their own respective community plan. This process is facilitated through a range of activities including community meetings, community newsletter questionnaire, visits to local groups and online consultation. This approach is central to ensuring each group is truly represents of its local community.

5 Corporate Implications

5.1 Financial

There is funding available of £16,000 from the capital programme to support the proposed community projects.

5.2 Environmental

Several of the projects have a positive impact on the local environment, including developing more energy efficient community facilities, encouraging green transport and offering educational opportunities to improve awareness and understanding of the local natural environment.

5.3 Equalities

The proposed funding will directly support the voluntary sector to assist a diverse range of residents including the old and vulnerable, young people, disabled residents and socially disadvantaged.

6 Links to Council Objectives

Work towards safer and healthier local communities

Improve community safety

- Work with partners to reduce crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour
- Work with young people at risk of becoming involved with crime

Promote healthier communities

- Address the needs of the elderly and those who are vulnerable

Promote local communities

- Support the voluntary sector and promote volunteering

Promote local communities

- Support the voluntary sector and promote volunteering
- Engage with Parish and Town Councils and local neighbourhoods

Conserve the environment

- Conserve our valuable heritage including the ANOB
- Promote energy efficiency and encourage the reduction of carbon emissions

7 Conclusion

7.1 Financial support of £16,000 from this Council will enhance the local environment; support the provision of new community assets; encourage an uplift to the local economy; and when delivered with the required funding would represent significant new investment into the District totalling in the region of £105,000.

Appendix 1 – Community Projects Delivered in 2015 by Chiltern’s Revitalisation Groups

1. **Amersham Action Group** - improvement to town centre streetscape; Small Business Saturday; Christmas town festival; summer carnival and festival in partnership with the town council and the Round Table; lobbying for a passenger lift at the station; representing community interests during discussions about civic centre and high street development; older and younger people projects.

2. **Amersham Old Town** – supporting isolated elderly; constructing a community meeting space with Gore Hill residents; lobbying for traffic calming; improving access for cyclists & walkers along A413; supporting outreach youth work in outlying neighbourhoods e.g. Danes Close.

3. **Chesham** - creating local public events which encourage greater footfall in the high street; young entrepreneurs and creative enterprises, specialist markets; support for volunteer led projects which improve the health and wellbeing of younger and older people; working with the Town Mayor & Community Impact Bucks to increase volunteers

4. **Chalfont St Giles** – manages the community library & visitor centre; developing the Misbourne pathway; encourages high street traffic calming; supports annual village show, youth club; summer high street events and a literary festival;

5. **Chalfont St Peter** – many volunteer led projects which improve health and wellbeing of younger and older people; developing a visitor strategy to increase high street footfall and visitors to local attractions e.g. Open Air museum; construction of a World War One Centenary memorial and gardens;

6. **Great Missenden Parish Revitalisation Group** – offers small grants which support younger & older villagers; & local environmental projects; supports a Prestwood action group which has plans to enhance the village centre; runs a proactive anti HS2 lobby;

7. **Little Chalfont Community Association** - is developing a community led nature park, supports street improvements; local business and community events such as Small Business Saturday; the village show, and supports the community run village library.

Appendix 2 – Revitalisation Groups Capital Funding Projects Funding Proposals**(a) Chesham - Improvements to High Street Amenity Signage**

The Market Town Health Check recommended that information for visitors to the town centre should be improved. This project will provide additional much needed directional signage in the town centre which will assist patrons walking to The Little Theatre by the Park (the former Temperance Hall), the Elgiva Theatre, along the High Street. A part refurbishment of the existing traditional signposts will help to enhance the High Street conservation area. New finger arms will be added to existing posts avoiding the need for new ones and the proliferation of street furniture. Chesham Action Partnership, Chesham Town Council and the Temperance Hall are all contributing partnership funding. The total project cost is in the region of £5,200.

A grant of £3,500 is recommended

(b) Amersham on the Hill - Community Area Plantation Road / Roundwood Road

With the support of nearby local residents this project provides the opportunity to enhance the natural environment and to create a welcoming community area between two footpaths. A proposed wildflower area will be created within a grassed area, adding seasonal colour into this currently forgotten and lonely space. Seating for elderly residents, and wooden stepping stones will add interest for families with young children. Existing signage and the telephone exchange within the corner area will be renovated as part of the proposals. The existing tree canopy will be opened, and overgrown vegetation will be cleared. The outcome will be a more accessible, safe space for use by residents of all ages. Partnership funding has been secured from Amersham Action Group, Amersham and District Residents Association and the Paradigm Foundation. The total project cost is in the region of £25,000.

A grant of £4,000 is recommended

(c) Amersham Town - Space for All

The need for a community gathering place and play area for the residents of Gore Hill, Piggotts, Fieldway and Hillway was first identified in Amersham's Market Town Health Check, which was supported by this council. The area is physically isolated by both roads and distance from the town centre. The area is recognised as under-represented in the Council's open spaces strategy. This project, well supported by local residents, will transform a neglected piece of land alongside Amersham bypass in unmanaged woodland, which has been used for fly-tipping. Plans include the provision of a wildlife trail and planting; to install bat bird and bug boxes; and picnic seating. The project will also provide an intriguing natural play environment for small children, with equipment in keeping with the local environment, crafted from responsibly sourced hardwoods and other natural materials. The total project cost is approximately £60,000. Funding for the project is being considered by the Paradigm Foundation, Chiltern Conservation Board, Veolia Environment Trust, Rotary Club; Lions Club, Tesco, G E Healthcare, Waitrose, ATC Queens Jubilee Fund. Gore Hill residents themselves are contributing through individual donations.

A grant of £3,500 is recommended

(d) Little Chalfont – Improvements to Pedestrian Underpass

This project will provide lighting in the underpass at the bottom of Beel Close, leading to Marigold Walk and a footpath to Chalfont & Latimer Station. This underpass, which is owned by London Underground (LU), has no lighting whatsoever and there have been attempts over the years to persuade LU to put in suitable lighting as a safety measure for all users. More recent requests have been turned down on the grounds of costs but there is now a possibility of approaching this on the basis of a joint project, with the community making a contribution to the cost and the Parish Council taking responsibility for future maintenance. Such a lighting scheme would involve not only vandal-proof strip lighting within the underpass but also lamp standards approaching both entrances and, as such could prove to be quite highly priced. Key to any successful arrangement with LU will be the extent of the potential support from this Capital Grant. As and when successful negotiations with LU are concluded but before any work is contracted, Little Chalfont Community Association (LCCA) shall provide a fully detailed proposal. This will also be supported by the results of a survey of users, including those who will currently not use the underpass in the dark for safety reasons, together with a supporting letter from the Police, confirming the need. The total project cost is likely to be in the region of £12,000.

A grant of £4,000 is recommended

(e) Chalfont St Peter – High Street Hanging Baskets.

It has been the tradition for many years for hanging baskets, flags and Christmas lights to be displayed along the shopping streets making Chalfont St Peter an attractive place to live, work, visit and shop leading to a tremendous sense of pride amongst villagers and enabling the village to flourish and bring added value and wellbeing. This project seeks to replace the hanging framework for the baskets which is very old, and no longer fit for purpose. Villagers and businesses raise the funding for the maintenance and replacement of other street decorations. Partnership funding is being provided by the parish council, Feast Day committee, village action group, retailers and businesses, and from public donations. The total project cost is approximately £5000

A grant of £1,000 is recommended