

Chiltern District Council
Community, Health & Housing PAG

SUBJECT:	<i>Chiltern District Revitalisation Groups Annual Report & Capital Grant Request 2016 - 2017</i>
REPORT OF:	<i>Councillor Liz Walsh – 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

It is proposed that £7,800 from the Capital Reserves be transferred into the approved Capital Programme list and used to support the Chiltern District's Revitalisation Groups projects which are presented in more detail in **Appendix 1**

- a) Little Chalfont – village centre notice boards project (£3,000)
- b) Chalfont St Giles – contribution to Milton's Cottage secondary glazing (£2,800)
- c) Great Missenden & Prestwood villages – community cycle parking project (£2000)

All awards will be subject to planning consent if required; and confirmation that on-going maintenance and insurance obligations will not be the responsibility of the Council.

2. Reasons for Recommendations

For over twenty years Chiltern's Revitalisation Groups have had a strong track record of facilitating community participation, encouraging residents to help shape and improve their own communities.

The groups continue to develop community led facilities and a range of important services/festivals across Chiltern's towns and villages. Examples include libraries and visitor information centres, intergenerational heritage projects, riverside walks, a nature park and High Street festivals. Revitalisation groups have also helped to fund raise for and develop new small voluntary groups which support all sections of the community including isolated older people, youth clubs and mums & toddler groups. Details of the projects recently delivered are detailed in **Appendix 2**.

Chiltern District Council
Community, Health & Housing PAG

It is anticipated that the proposed £7,800 funding will help to lever in partnership project funding of nearly £10,000 into Chiltern District from other stakeholders and will help to deliver the work of the Revitalisation Groups.

3. Content of Report

3.1 The Revitalisation Groups are independent voluntary organisations which work closely with parish, town, district councils and the county council.

3.2 The Council established these groups in the 1990s and continues to support their development. Working directly with residents and all councils the groups help determine key local priorities for residents in the towns and villages. The community projects which they initiate impact positively on residents' wellbeing.

3.3 An important function of the groups' working practice is to encourage a closer working relationship directly with shops and small businesses and the chambers of trade and commerce. The groups support town and village centre festivals and carnivals which improve footfall into the high street. In 2015/16 examples include Chalfont St Giles Music and Beer festival, Chesham's Chinese New Year and St George's Day street festivals. In the run up to Christmas it is the Revitalisation Groups which lead and co-ordinate the High Street lights "switch ons", and the "late night" shopping events and community festivals.

3.4 All groups took part in Small Business Saturday 2016. This is a nationwide grass roots campaign which promotes small businesses and high street retailers. It is supported by local authorities across the country. This Council provides publicity, helps to stage local events and provides free parking on the first Saturday in December.

3.5 Each revitalisation group receives an annual grant of £2,000 from the Council. Groups must allocate some to meet its running costs including meeting room hire, website maintenance, public events insurance. Most support local community led projects and the smaller voluntary groups. Examples from each group are detailed in **Appendix 2.**

3.6 The Revitalisation groups have a proven record in delivering large scale capital projects. In 2016 they updated visitor and amenity signage in Chesham High Street and provided a play area Amersham Old Town.

4. Consultation

The Revitalisation groups aim to be fully inclusive in their decision making. They seek the widest possible representation from voluntary organisations and service providers

Chiltern District Council
Community, Health & Housing PAG

which include Police, social housing landlords and health agencies. The local councils are invited for consultation and advice, and to participate in projects.

5. Corporate Implications

5.1 Financial

£7,800 is sought from the Council's capital reserves to support the various community led capital projects detailed in the report.

The groups have been invited to apply for some of this funding to support local projects which encourage closer working between voluntary groups and local business, encourage diversification in the high street, and support speciality markets which collectively improve the local economy.

Appendix 2 details the proposed projects requesting funding from Chiltern District Council.

5.2 Environmental

Projects have a positive impact on the environment, including developing more energy efficient community facilities, 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 elderly and vulnerable, young people, disabled residents and socially disadvantaged.

6 Links to Council Policy 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

Chiltern District Council
Community, Health & Housing PAG

Promote local communities

- Support the voluntary sector and promote volunteering
- Engage with parish and town councils
- Engage with local neighbourhoods
- Support diversification and increased footfall in local high streets

Conserve the environment

- Conserve local heritage including the CAONB
- Promote energy efficiency and encourage the reduction of carbon emissions

7 Conclusion

7.1 Financial support of £7,800 will enhance the local environment, support the provision of community assets; encourage an uplift to the local economy and help attract new investment into the District.