
TITLE: Service Level Agreement Funding (Leisure Centres and Sport Facilities) 2018-19: Update Report

Committee: Community Services Committee

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1. ISSUE

- 1.1. To agree further grant funding allocations for the 2018-19 financial year for leisure centres and sport facilities.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1. The Committee is requested to agree the allocations recommended below.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. Grants are offered to leisure facility providers to support material improvements to their services, whether through capital improvements, programme developments or organisational developments. In all cases the outcomes sought are to strengthen the long-term sustainability of the facility, to extend the activity opportunities for the local community, or both.
- 3.2. The grants are offered so far as possible on a rolling programme, which supports the principle of funding being project-led. Providers are therefore not required to submit applications by any particular deadline, and it can be assumed that proposals will continue to be submitted through the year.
- 3.3. The annual budget for this programme is £30,881. The total of allocations approved so far is £8,640, though two commitments were carried over from the previous year and these also need to be factored into the budgetary calculations. This is discussed further below.

4. ARGUMENTS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1. Since the Committee last met in September, further proposals have been received as follows:

Ellesmere Centre

Proposal: Replacement and additions to gym equipment

Anticipated Cost	£5,467
Grant requested	£5,000
Grant recommended	£4,950

Comments:

In recent years, the centre has developed a 'micro' gym facility (and a separate beauty treatment area) in an old squash court viewing gallery. It was funded directly by the centre at minimal cost (some items have been donated locally), and is used by individuals as a local alternative to the commercial gyms and the sports centre in Newmarket. Use has grown, though it remains very small-scale.

The Centre is now seeking to initiate a small group session (with technical support from the gym management team at Littleport) for those suffering from certain major health conditions, including appropriate medical referrals. This will be based on chair-based exercise but also utilise the gym. This will require further equipment - some specific to the needs of that group, and some more general items to increase the capacity. In the course of planning this programme, the centre has also commissioned a technical review of the existing gym equipment, and has been advised that some items should be replaced to support full public usage, though this can be done with industry-standard reconditioned equipment in order to mitigate the cost.

On this basis, the total cost of the proposed upgrading is £5,465, of which £5,365 is for apparatus, and £100 is for disposable and hand-held items. The Centre has been both tenacious and successful in its fund-raising over recent years, but this has been – and remains – focused on long-standing structural issues which reflect the age of the building; and the gym itself has to be seen as a local service rather than a commercial investment. Officers therefore recommend a substantial award, which will largely cover the cost of the major equipment.

Ross Peers Sports Centre

Proposal: Improvements to studio (converted squash court)

Anticipated Cost

Installation of suspended ceiling (including acoustic insulation)	£3,210
New LED light panels	£360
Training mirrors	£1,480
Sub-total	£5,050
Irrecoverable VAT (estimate)	£505
Total	£5,555
Grant recommended	£4,950

Comments:

The squash court was partially converted to a general purpose studio in 2016, supported by a grant of £3,950. Weaknesses in the conversion were however identified early on, and user feedback has continued to confirm these weaknesses: the space remains cavernous, the lights (the

original squash court lights) are 6 metres up from the floor, and the acoustics are unworkable for any kind of group session. The primary proposal therefore is to install a suspended ceiling with integral lighting panels and acoustic insulation, which is expected to mitigate all three problems. In addition, visually the area remains a squash court, albeit with rubber matting and a power socket. It is therefore also proposed to install wall-mirrors.

Conversions of this kind can be somewhat compromised by budget, and this remains a low-budget project; but it would bring the studio more fully into use, with benefits both to the community and to the Centre's income-streams. Three quotations have been received, and a mid-range figure has been used for estimating purposes at this stage. The Centre benefits from a partial VAT exemption on its income, so not all of the input (ie, expenditure) VAT is recoverable, and the estimates allow for this.

The recommendation is therefore that an allocation of £4,950 should be made available, subject to the following conditions:

- a) The specification and cost of all elements to be definitively finalised and confirmed to ECDC officers prior to any order being placed
- b) The Association to accept any further cost-risk in relation to VAT or other cost-variances
- c) Any value-engineering which may be needed to be confined to the mirror-installation, and agreed with ECDC officers prior to placing or amending the commission for the work.

4.2. Further to the previous recommendations, the pool vacuum agreed for Bottisham Sports Centre has been purchased, and the ECDC contribution finalised at £1,923. The commencement of the Re-Play programme at Littleport has been delayed until the New Year, due to capacity issues, and slightly revised in terms of its approach. The amendments do not affect the scope or intent of the scheme, and officers remain confident that the project is worthy of support, subject to the original conditions. The main effect of the delay – since the costs are in part, time-related – is to reduce the level of support required; this is now estimated at £4,870. So with minor rounding, the approved commitments so far this year total £6,800.

4.3. The recommendations in this report represent a further allocation of £9,900, taking the total committed for the year to £16,700. In addition however, commitments carried across from 2017-18 due to timing issues (£14,180) need to be factored into the budgetary calculations, giving a total to date of £30,880. This remains within the normal budgetary provision.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS / EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1. The proposed funding allocations fall within the existing budget.
- 5.2. No new equalities implications follow from these proposals.

Background documents

None

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