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

Committee: Community Services Committee

Date: 26th June 2018

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[T36]

1. ISSUE

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

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1. The Committee is invited to agree to the recommended allocations as set out 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 (less often) 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.

4. ARGUMENTS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1. Submissions have been received from:

Bottisham Sports Centre (Bottisham Village College)

Proposal: New automated pool vacuum

Anticipated Cost £1,000

Grant requested £1,000

No partnership funding has been proposed

Comments:

The rationale for the purchase is that it will improve the day-to-day condition of the pool, and give users better water quality. There is no reason to question this.

No partnership funding has been put forward; but the amount requested from ECDC is modest, and the Trust which now governs Bottisham is engaged in a significant improvement programme for the facilities as a whole, which is expected to cost around £500,000.

In this context, the proposal looks reasonable and the recommendation is to support it.

Littleport Leisure

Proposal: Targeted social activities programme

Anticipated Cost

Start-up costs	£2,365
Staffing (external, specialist instructors)	£3,600
Facilities (use of school pool)	£1,350
Sub-total	£7,315
Facilities (internal re-charges at normal rates)	£3,840
Total	£11,155
Projected income	£3,000
Net Cost	£8,155
Grant recommended	£6,640

Comments

The project is aimed at members of the community who may be isolated or deterred by circumstances from engaging in centre activities, and the programme will reflect that in the breadth and informality of activities offered (including some limited use of the school's hydrotherapy pool; this is small, but would offer an option to those with more limited mobility). The user charges will be kept low initially to encourage new participants, while protecting the long-term sustainability of the programme.

Like any experimental programme, the project carries some risks, mostly around income levels, and finding the right formula to attract and maintain support; but if successful, it will help to broaden the centre's user-base, and offer something new to the community.

The programme costs include both actual direct costs (eg equipment purchases, external specialist staff) and internal re-charges for the use of facilities. These latter are however largely notional, assuming that no paying bookings are displaced and that there is no significant income

foregone. This element lends itself to treatment as partnership funding, since there is no direct cost to the centre but it helps to reduce the cost of the programme. Conversely, if the centre is asked to absorb the cost of the space used, any session income (ie, charges to those attending) will be retained and contribute towards the use of that space.

This, and the adoption of entry-level pricing while the programme becomes established, have been discussed and agreed in principle with the Centre management. On this basis officers consider the proposal worthy of support, and recommend:

- a) Approval of a grant to cover the cost of start-up, external instructors, and a 50% contribution to the cost of pool-hire, all to March 2019.

This is estimated at £6,640, and it is recommended that the grant is set at this level. This will be largely remove the cost risk from the centre, allowing them to pilot and hopefully establish the programme on a sustainable basis.

- b) A grant-condition that charges should be held down for this period while the programme establishes itself.

4.2. In summary, the two grants recommended for approval at this stage would total £7,640. Normal procedures will be applied to ensure that the funds are applied as intended.

4.3. Of the providers which have not yet submitted a bid:

4.3.1. Burwell Sports Centre remains focused on the renewal of its roof, funding for which was approved last year but which is only now able to proceed due to delays in the confirmation of partnership funding.

4.3.2. No application has so far been received from the Ellesmere Centre. The Centre is also seeking to renew its roof, and has some finance in place for this, but a funding gap remains and a bid may therefore follow when that gap is more clearly defined.

4.3.3. Ely Outdoor Sports Association has carried out some improvements to its clubhouse, and further work is planned. Some elements of this are likely to be worth consideration, and a proposal is expected later in the summer. The Association is also raising funds for a replacement hockey surface, which is now critical as the existing surface is no longer fully fit for purpose. A bid for funding to close any final gap may therefore also be brought forward, when all of the other relevant avenues have been explored.

- 4.3.4. Ross Peers Sports Centre has indicated that they may wish to seek funding towards the installation of fans in the exercise areas, to provide comfort cooling. Further details are awaited. The scope for potential improvements at the centre extends well beyond this however, and officers will be seeking to engage with the Trust to develop a concerted approach.
- 4.3.5. No application is expected from Paradise Sports Centre, as the Centre currently has access to other funding sources and is carrying out its own modernisation programme.
- 4.4. Officers are also aware of early discussions around several other possible facility developments across the district – each of which could potentially represent a distinct and substantive enhancement to the district’s leisure facility-offer. None is yet sufficiently developed for consideration, and they are likely to require discussion as to the scope of this funding programme (though they potentially fit well with its general purpose). Any such proposals will be put before the Committee as they emerge.

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	Location	Contact Officer
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