

REPORT TO: Grants Advisory Committee 24 August 2023

LEAD CABINET MEMBER: Councillor John Williams, Lead Cabinet Member for Resources

LEAD OFFICER: Jeff Membery, Head of Transformation, HR and Corporate Services

Physical Activity Grants for Dual Use Leisure Centres

Executive Summary

1. The purpose of this paper is to present applications from the Dual Use Leisure Centres seeking grant funding to increase their range of physical activity programmes to help boost membership numbers to pre-pandemic levels. Officers have outlined their recommendations for the Grants Advisory Committee (GAC) to consider in making their own recommendations to the Lead Member for Resources regarding grant awards.

Key Decision

2. Is this a Key Decision? – No.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that the Grants Advisory Committee considers all applications for funding that are set out in Appendix A to this report and makes a recommendation to the Lead Cabinet Member. The Committee could defer a decision if further information is required. Alternatively, they could reject an application if it doesn't comply with the grant criteria.

Reasons for Recommendations

4. The Grants Advisory Committee's role is to consider and make recommendations to the Lead Cabinet Member for Resources, or Cabinet as appropriate, including, but not limited to:

- a) Reviewing the Council's grant schemes to ensure they reflect Council priorities.
- b) Designing any new or revised grant schemes, including consideration of criteria and guidance applicable in respect of each scheme.
- c) Considering applications made under the Council's grant schemes.

Details

5. The Physical Activity grant scheme was created as a one-off grant fund specifically for the Dual Use Centres to make best use of unspent funds from the Physical Activity budget (2022-2023) held by the Physical Activity Coordinator.
6. The grant was created following ongoing consultation with Centres regarding the negative impacts of the pandemic on Membership numbers and the slow recovery to pre-pandemic levels, compounded by exponentially high increases in energy costs and the cost-of-living squeeze on personal budgets.
7. Centres were invited to apply for sums up to £1,000 with the objective that the proposal or project must deliver one or more of the following:
 - a. Re-start/establish any classes/sessions/activities that ceased due to the Covid pandemic.
 - b. Start a new class/session/activity which fulfils a gap or need identified via member/public request/consultation.
 - c. Train existing and/or new staff to deliver new classes/sessions/activities.
8. A full list of applications, together with officer comments can be found in the table in Appendix A.
9. Guidance notes and eligibility criteria can be found in Appendix B.
10. The total amount of funding available is £9,000.
11. 5 applications were received, totalling **£4,698**
12. Any unspent funds following these grant allocations will be returned to the Council's general fund.
13. All applications were considered eligible and suitable to receive funding from this scheme. Officers have scored the applications against each of the objectives in Appendix A including officer comments and summaries of applications.
14. The panel was made up of 3 council officers, who used a tried and tested scoring matrix to assess the application against the aims and objectives of the fund. Weightings were applied as follows:

- a. 30% weighting applied to how well the proposal met the objectives
- b. 35% weighting applied to how the funding would achieve the longer term aims of the Centres.
- c. 35% weighting applied to how the application might grow membership

Options

15. The Grants Advisory Committee should consider each application for funding as set out in Appendix A to this report. The Committee could then make a recommendation to the Lead Cabinet Member for Resources to award funding in line with officer recommendations, or different amounts (including zero funding) giving reasons. The Committee could also defer a decision, if further information is required from the applicant.

Implications

16. There are no significant implications

Risks/Opportunities

17. Applicants are required to provide supporting documents including copies of their constitution, financial accounts and quotes where applicable. Applicants must agree to the grant conditions before funds are released.

Consultation responses

18. There has been engagement with Council Officers and leisure centre operators as appropriate.

Effect on Council Priority Areas

19. The proposal supports the investment in vital community assets, providing jobs, training and increased revenues in the leisure industry which is feeling the impact of the current economic environment. It has taken longer to recover since the Covid pandemic and continues to be negatively impacted by increased energy costs and the cost-of-living squeeze on personal budgets.

Background Papers

Grants Advisory Committee Meeting on 26/05/2023. [Leisure Centre Grant Proposal May 2023.pdf \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

Appendices

Appendix A: Application overview and Officer panel scores

Appendix B: Application criteria

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