

REPORT TO: Cabinet

3 April 2019

Lead Cabinet Member Councillor John Williams

LEAD OFFICER: Head of Sustainable Communities and Wellbeing

Elite Athlete Award Scheme: 2018/19 Review

Purpose

1. To set out the findings of the Grants Advisory Committee's review of the Elite Athlete Award Scheme and recommend that the scheme is discontinued.
2. This is not a key decision.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that Cabinet:
 - (a) discontinues the Elite Athlete Award Scheme, and
 - (b) agrees to add signposting information to the website, and
 - (c) agrees to use the funding for 2019/20 onwards to increase other existing grant funds, in line with the new Business Plan priorities, to be advised by Grants Advisory Committee.

Reasons for Recommendations

4. The Grants Advisory Committee's role is to consider and make recommendations to the Lead Cabinet Member responsible for grants, or Cabinet as appropriate, including, but not limited to:
 - (a) Review of the Council's grants schemes to ensure they reflect Council priorities.
 - (b) Design of any new or revised grants schemes, including consideration of criteria and guidance applicable in respect of each scheme.
 - (c) Consideration of applications made under the Council's grants schemes.
5. The Elite Athlete Award Scheme was reviewed by the Grants Advisory Committee. Whilst beneficial for the individuals that receive it, is not reflective of the Council's priorities for 2019 to 2024.
6. There is £10,000 set aside in the 2019/20 budget towards the scheme, which could be reallocated if a decision is made to discontinue with the scheme. Grants Advisory Committee recommends that these funds are reallocated within existing grant funding schemes, to be advised by the Committee.

Background

7. South Cambridgeshire District Council was inspired by the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games to invite all elite athletes to apply for an elite athlete award to

support their sporting talent. The Elite Athlete Awards Scheme was launched by Lord Sebastian Coe in July 2009.

8. The scheme is open to both able-bodied and disabled athletes, with priority going to those taking part in Olympic, Paralympic and Commonwealth sports.
9. The scheme supports any athlete who lives in South Cambridgeshire. If an applicant studies or trains outside South Cambridgeshire they can still apply, provided their family home is in the district. Applicants who are studying at a College or University within South Cambridgeshire are not eligible unless they also have a family home within the district.
10. All grant recipients are expected to provide a short end of year report including details of their performance and how the grant has been spent in accordance with the information provided in the application. A further condition of grant is that recipients are able to attend at least one community event within a 12 month period following receipt of the grant.
11. Grants are awarded to athletes competing at all levels from regional level (up to £500), national level (up to £1,000), to world class level (up to £2,000). It is a competitive process and applications are assessed with regard to eligibility, performance and potential.
12. The scheme was originally set up to run from 2009 until 2012, however, has since been extended as a legacy to the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.
13. Historically, a multi-agency grants panel has made award recommendations to members for decision. In recent years, the panel has been made up of representative from the South Cambs School Sports Partnership, Living Sport and the Council.

Considerations

14. The budget for the scheme was initially £20,000 per year, which was reduced to £10,000 in 2012/13. The budget was increased in each of the previous two years to accommodate additional applicants.

Year	Budget ¹ (£)	Total Amount Awarded (£)	Number of applicants
2017/18	10,000	16,350	35
2016/17	10,000	12,000	32
2015/16	10,000	10,050	16
2014/15	10,000	3,300	8
2013/14	10,000	5,350	17
2012/13	10,000 ²	10,000	19

¹ A small amount of funding has been allocated to publicity each year.

² Uncommitted balances from previous years.

2011/12	20,000	12,700	33
2010/11	20,000	14,550	26
2009/10	20,000	14,250	24

15. Prior to 2015/16 the awards were made twice a year. This was amended to ensure that all applications could be viewed together and to ensure that the most deserving athletes were awarded the grants. Additional publicity was also put in place from 2015/16, with social media, radio and film being utilised as well as the South Cambs Magazine and other media outlets.

16. Grants Advisory Committee also looked at what other grants were available to applicants and at the possibility of means testing the scheme:

(a) Are there other grants available for South Cambridgeshire applicants?

Many grant funding schemes are only available to groups. Schemes that we believe are available to individuals include:

- Sports Aid (Cambridgeshire Sports Aid) – typically 12-18 year olds, must be nominated by their sport governing body.
- TASS (Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme) – up to £3,500
- The Ron Pickering Memorial Fund – typically 15-23 year olds
- The Dickie Bird Foundation – children under 16, varying amounts
- GLL Sports Foundation – all ages, £250-£1,500
- Johanna Brown Trust – young people, £100-£1,000
- Princes Trust – 16-30 year olds, up to £500
- Get Kids Going (Disabilities) – up to 26 year olds
- Caudwell Children ‘Enable Sport’ (Disabilities) – under 19 years old

Most of the funds are national pots.

(b) The scheme is not currently means tested. How can the Council be sure that the grants are being awarded to those most in need?

Looking at other grant funding schemes available, some are means tested. Examples of questions include “do the child's parents/guardians earn less than £45k gross per annum?”. It should be remembered that the South Cambs Elite Athlete Award Scheme has historically been available to people of any age.

Feedback from previous recipients show that the grants are appreciated because it

- provided a welcome additional contribution to equipment and training,
- allowed sportmen and women to take their sport to the next level,
- allowed opportunities to train and compete abroad, and
- is a positive scheme for young people.

17. In reviewing the scheme against the Council’s 2019-2024 Business Plan it is clear that it does not support the plan’s objective to create thriving communities. The Council’s plan includes action to encourage more people to participate in active and healthy lifestyles, including increasing the number of sporting activities we deliver, or in partnership, for all ages and abilities each year. Whilst there is a wealth of evidence to support that participation in regular physical activity has both direct and

indirect impacts on people's physical and mental health, and enables people to build social capital³, there is a lack of evidence to support that the Olympic Games, or individual elite athletes, can encourage the wider population into physical activity⁴. According to the most recent UK Physical Activity Report published by the British Heart Foundation 2017⁵, 39% of adults in the UK still do not meet the recommended physical activity levels and the number of children meeting the recommended amount of physical activity for healthy development drops by 40% as they progress through primary school⁶. It is likely that the people being supported by the scheme would continue to remain active and healthy if the grant scheme was discontinued.

Options

18. Cabinet could:
 - (a) discontinue the Elite Athlete Award Scheme, or
 - (b) continue the Elite Athlete Award Scheme under the same terms and conditions as the existing scheme, or
 - (c) continue the Elite Athlete Award Scheme, with amendments (to be specified) to the existing scheme.

19. If the scheme is discontinued, Cabinet could agree to
 - (a) use the funding for 2019/20 onwards to increase other existing grant funds, in line with the new Business Plan priorities, to be advised by Grants Advisory Committee, or
 - (b) reallocate the 2019/20 funding to the General Fund, or
 - (c) reallocate the 2019/20 funding for another purpose (to be specified).

Implications

20. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk management, equality and diversity, climate change, community safety and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered: -

Equality and Diversity

21. It is difficult to quantify the potential impact of discontinuing the Elite Athlete Award Scheme because equality and diversity information has not been required of applicants and the scheme has not been means tested.

Financial

22. At the end of the financial year, the Elite Athlete Scheme funding for 2018/19 will be rolled over into the Mobile Warden Scheme grant fund for 2019/20 in order to fund additional schemes (Mobile Warden Scheme Grant Funding 2019/20 decision by the Lead Cabinet Member for Finance on 28 February 2019) and enable the Council to support the set up of further schemes across the district.

Consultation responses

23. There has been no consultation carried out, however, the recommendations are linked to the 2018/19 Corporate Plan and new priorities for 2019-2024, which have

³ Improving the public's health: A resource for local authorities, The King's Fund, 2013.

⁴ [Can the London 2012 Olympics inspire a generation to do more physical or sporting activities. An overview of systematic reviews](#)

⁵ [BHF Physical Inactivity and Sedentary Behaviour Report 2017](#)

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/number-of-children-getting-enough-physical-activity-drops-by-40>

recently been consulted upon. The consultation responses for the draft priorities for 2019-2024 were published with the agenda for the Scrutiny and Overview Committee on 22 January 2019. There were no significant comments that relate to this report.

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