

Report to:	Grants Advisory Committee	26 May 2023
Lead Cabinet Member:	Cllr Bill Handley	
Lead Officer:	Jeff Membery	

Grant Funding for South Cambridgeshire Leisure Centres

Executive Summary

1. Grants Advisory Committee is asked to make a recommendation to the Lead Member for Resources regarding the creation of a one-off grant fund for Dual Use Leisure Centres using £9,000 from the Council's existing and available funding held by the Physical Activity Coordinator.
2. Such a grant scheme would enable our leisure centres to introduce classes to help draw back people to pre-pandemic activity levels and build and maintain membership.
3. To provide this financial support would help the Council align to two of the priorities outlined by the Integrated Care System Health Strategy published in December 2022:
 - Creating an environment to give people the opportunities to be as healthy as they can be
 - Promoting early intervention and prevention measures to improve mental health and well-being

Key Decision

4. No

Recommendations

5. It is recommended that the Grants Advisory Committee makes a recommendation to the Lead Member for Resources to approve the allocation of £9,000 of existing and available funding to a one-off scheme, with criteria as proposed below.

Reasons for Recommendations

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

Details

7. The District Council play a key role in helping to improve population health by creating opportunities to promote physical and mental health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities, obesity rates and physical inactivity.
8. Our leisure centres play a key role in this agenda through provision of local place-based initiatives. Attendance figures at leisure centres remain lower than pre-pandemic levels (table 1).
9. The combination of rising inflation, high interest rates and energy bills is proving to be a difficult economic environment for Centres to introduce classes which may not attract full attendance initially.
10. The table below illustrates the change in membership numbers from pre-Covid to current levels. With the exception of Linton and Gamlingay, all centres continue to operate with reduced membership numbers.

Table 1	Membership			
Centre	Pre-Covid	Post-Covid	Mar-23	% Change from pre covid to current
Cambourne	1010	515	738	-27%
Comberton	472	230	395	-17%
Gamlingay	65	**0	129	50%
Impington	1614	894	1374	-15%
Linton	72	14	*120	66%
Melbourn	1036	510	787	-24%
Sawston	375	125	300	-20%
Swavesey	55	16	22	60%

* increase in membership attributed to investment from SCDC and Anglia Learning Trust

** Following change in ownership

11. We asked our Centres if there were any classes that were offered prior to Covid that have yet to begin again, where cost was the barrier to re-starting. The table below provides a synopsis of responses.

Centre	Which classes would you like to introduce or reintroduce where cost might be a barrier?
Cambourne	Group exercise classes (including Yoga, Body Combat, KettleBells etc)
Comberton	Zumba, over 60's keep fit
Gamlingay	Group sessions, netball, tennis, badminton and pilates
Impington	No classes but biggest barrier is recruitment and retention of staff
Linton	None
Melbourn	Pilates, 'dry-side' classes and more trampoline sessions
Sawston	Soft play, cardiac phase 4, swimming teaching
Swavesey	Martial arts, climbing club,

12. The aim of this grant is for the dual use Centres to either:

- a. Re-start/establish any classes/session/activity 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.

13. The grant scheme would use existing and available funds and be made up of £6,500 of unspent funds from 2022-23 (rolled over) and £2,500 from the 2023-24 budget. From 2024-25 onwards, the £2,500 in this budget could be allocated to the same grant scheme if appropriate, or an alternative that would align the Council's work to the ICS objectives and priorities at that time, and in accordance with the Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

14. The £6,500 unspent funds had previously been allocated to Physical Activity, specifically the Exercise Referral Scheme (yet to return to pre-covid referral levels) and savings from the delivery of the holiday sports camps.

Proposed Criteria

15. Applicants must be a Dual Use Leisure Centre within South Cambridgeshire.

16. The maximum amount of funding that can be applied for per Centre is £1,000.

17. Funds are to be used for training staff, purchase of capital equipment and other revenue costs associated with the set up or re-launch of classes.

18. The funds should be used within 6 months of receipt and no later than 31 March 2024.

19. The funds should be used to support up to the first 10 sessions of an activity.

20. Each centre would be asked to report:

- Attendance at each of the classes/sessions/activities
- Number of existing members attending

- Number of new members attending
- Summary of how successful the class/session/activity has been
- Confirm whether the class/session/activity will continue beyond the term of the funding.

21. Where the funding is used to train staff, the training must be undertaken within 3 months of receipt of funding.

22. Proposed Timeline

- Scheme launch June 2023
- Applications reviewed by officers and recommendations brought to August GAC (see draft application/criteria in Appendix 1).
- Centres have from September 2023 to 31 March 2024 to spend their grant.
- End of Project Reports to GAC by end May 2024, to include proposals for the use of the £2,500 allocated to 2024-25 financial year (see point 13 above).

Options

23. The Grants Advisory Committee may consider to:

- Agree to recommend to the Lead Cabinet Member for Resources the new grant proposal and proposed criteria
- Agree to recommend to the Lead Cabinet Member for Resources the new grant proposal with suggestion to alter the proposed amount and/or criteria
- Defer a decision if further information is required
- Reject the proposal and not recommend it to the Lead Cabinet Member for Resources, stating the reason for this

Implications

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

Consultation responses

25. Internal engagement with officers and leisure centre operators.

Alignment with Council Priority Areas

Growing local businesses and economies

26. The proposal supports the investment in vital community assets, providing jobs, training and increased revenues in the leisure industry which continues to feel the impacts of the 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.

A modern and caring Council

27. Increasing access to locally-based physical activity programmes for residents, to help prevent ill-health and maintain happy, healthy and active lives.

Appendices

Appendix A: Draft application and scoring matrix

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