

Management Committee

11 July 2017

Grant request from Weymouth Amateur Boxing Club

For Decision

Portfolio Holder:

Cllr Kate Wheller – Community Facilities

Senior Leadership Team Contact:

M Hamilton, Strategic Director

Report Author:

T. Hurley, Leisure Commissioning Manager

Statutory Authority

Localism Act 2011 – ‘general power of competence’.

Purpose of Report

1. To present to the committee a grant request from Weymouth Amateur Boxing Club to assist with its project to construct a new clubhouse at The Marsh.

Officer Recommendations

2. That Management Committee;
 - a) considers the request from Weymouth Amateur Boxing Club for a one-off grant of £30,000 to assist with the project to construct a new clubhouse (planning application WP/15/00296) at The Marsh, Knightsdale Road, Weymouth to be funded from the reserves already earmarked for one-off projects;
 - b) gives delegated authority to the Strategic Director to agree the terms of a grant agreement with the Weymouth Amateur Boxing Club if the grant requested in recommendation 2 (a) is agreed.

Reason for Decision

3. To enable the council to respond to a grant request from Weymouth Amateur Boxing Club and, if agreed, to ensure that the grant is subject to an appropriate legal agreement.

Background and Reason Decision Needed

4. Weymouth Amateur Boxing Club currently operates from its own premises on Hardwick Street in Weymouth. Over the last three years the club has developed a project to build a new clubhouse at The Marsh in Weymouth. This new development would move the club to a better location (but still accessible to its current members) where there was the potential to develop synergy with other sports organisations.
5. In August 2015, Management Committee considered a report from the Estates Manager which set out the club's proposals at The Marsh and sought agreement to offer the club a long lease on the site adjacent to the Moonfleet Indoor Bowls Club. The council owns the freehold of the site. In addition to awarding a lease, it was also agreed to award a grant of £20,000 to the project to be derived from insurance money received by the council following fire damage to the old 'Red Cross Hut' at The Marsh, which was used by both the Cougars Youth Football Club and the athletics club. As the boxing club was intending to allow both these clubs use its new premises, it seemed an appropriate use of the insurance money.
6. However, despite securing a significant amount of money for the project, including a major grant from Sport England, the boxing club has seen the cost of construction due to delays and technical complexities which have arisen. Delays to the project in 2016 and 2017 arose from the need for the club to obtain building regulations and agree shared accommodation arrangements with the Moonfleet Indoor Bowls Club and the Cougars Youth Football Club. The club is, therefore, now faced with the very real possibility that it will have to abandon the project unless significant additional funding can be found.
7. Changes to the project's costs can be summarised as follows based on information supplied by the club:
 - In February 2017 the project cost approximately £284,000.
 - Since then the costs have increased due to the cost of providing utilities to the site (adding £18k) and materials costs have increased by 10%.
 - The club has incurred additional legal fees in part due to the new building being attached to the adjacent bowls club.

The whole project is now estimated to cost £340,000 whereas the club only has £286,000 secured. Having exhausted all other avenues for fundraising, the club has submitted a request to the borough council for £30,000 and the remaining £24,000 required to address the shortfall will be provided by a club director in the form of a loan.

8. This request for a grant of £30,000 is, therefore, presented to Management Committee for consideration. The club appreciates that the borough council is facing significant financial pressures and does not have an established grants budget that can readily support such schemes. The

club is also grateful for the £20,000 already awarded to the project by the council from the insurance money.

9. It should be noted that, to date, the council has committed considerable time and resource to supporting the club's efforts including finalisation of the key legal documents to facilitate the project and the leasing. In addition, officer time and the balance of the insurance monies have been used to ensure the removal the fire damaged Red Cross Hut and create additional on-site parking.
10. If the committee were to agree to support the boxing club's project further, then any grant would be subject to a legal agreement (using the council's standard grant agreement template) and any funding would not be released without both evidence of expenditure and confirmation that all other grants/loans had been secured. No grant funding would be released in advance of the project's commencement.
11. The creation of a bespoke new clubhouse for Weymouth Amateur Boxing Club will enable this popular local club to further develop the services that it offers to the local community, particularly to young people, and to become part of the growing 'hub' of sports facilities at The Marsh as recognised by the council's *Sports Facilities Strategy* and the emerging masterplan for the site.

Implications

12. **Corporate Plan.** *Empowering Thriving and Inclusive Communities.* The council's support will enable the Weymouth Amateur Boxing Club to operate effectively for the benefit of the community.
13. **Financial.** The council does not have a budget for grants to support community sports projects. Any additional financial support for the club will need to be derived from the reserves already earmarked for one-off projects. If agreed, this will result in less resources being available for other schemes and projects.
14. **Equalities.** The new boxing club building will be far more accessible to those with disabilities than the club's existing premises. The Club also offers very affordable rates of admission and membership in order to ensure that cost is not a barrier to participation.
15. **Economic Development.** Sports facilities can contribute to economic growth by helping to reduce anti-social behaviour and by contributing to the development of health and wellbeing.
16. **Risk Management (including Health & Safety).** In order to manage any financial risk, a legal agreement will need to accompany any grant that the council offer's the club and this will require evidence of expenditure before any funding is released. If the council were not to offer the club a grant, as requested, that the project is unlikely to proceed and this may present a reputational risk for the council. However, given that the club embarked on the project without the expectation of a council grant then this risk can be minimised through effective communication.

Consultation and Engagement

17. Consultation on the recommendations in this report has been undertaken with the briefholder for Community Facilities, Cllr Kate Wheller.

Appendices

18. None.

Background Papers

19. Report to Management Committee, 4th August 2015: *Lease of land and Grant to Weymouth Amateur Boxing Club.*

Footnote

20. Issues relating to financial, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

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