

Management Committee

15 August 2017

Award of grant for improvements to the Osprey Leisure Centre on Portland

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 South Dorset Community Sports Trust to assist with facility improvements to the Osprey Leisure Centre on Portland.

Officer Recommendations

2. That Management Committee:
 - a) awards a one-off grant of £65,000 to South Dorset Community Sports Trust Ltd (charity no. 1101711) to assist with facility improvements to the Osprey Leisure Centre at Castletown, Portland, as summarised in Appendix A to be funded from the reserves already set aside for one-off projects;
 - b) makes any grant to the South Dorset Community Sports Trust Ltd, as recommended in 2(a), conditional on the Trust submitting details for the improvements to the facilities, information as to how the improvements will help to increase the Centre’s role as a community health and wellbeing facility, and details of any match funding secured from other sources;
 - c) gives delegated authority to the Strategic Director to agree, in consultation with the Briefholder, the terms of a grant agreement with the South Dorset Community Sports Trust Ltd if the grant requested in recommendation 2 (a) is agreed.

Reason for Decision

3. To enable the council to respond to assist with facility improvements to the Osprey Leisure Centre and, if agreed, to ensure that the grant is subject to an appropriate legal agreement.

Background and Reason Decision Needed

4. The Osprey Leisure Centre is an independent facility that is now operated by the South Dorset Community Sports Trust Ltd under a lease from a private landowner with 42- years remaining. The Trust has run the centre since the borough council passed over the management in 2007. The council no longer has any property or operational responsibilities for the facility.
5. The Osprey Sports Centre is an important recreational facility for the residents of Portland and other nearby areas of the borough, and compliments the provision offered at Weymouth Swimming Pool. Formerly a naval facility, the Centre comprises a swimming pool, large sports hall, squash courts, fitness studios and various other areas that have the potential for community use.
6. Since taking over the operation of the centre in 2007, the Trust states that customer numbers have more that trebled. In 2017, the centre received over 105,000 visits, half of which were for swimming activities including the weekly lesson programme.
7. In 2011-12, the borough council made the final payment of a 5-year phased funding arrangement with the Trust totalling £160,000 as a contribution to the running costs of leisure centre. The operation of the leisure centre is now entirely funded by income from paying customers and any one-off grants that the Trust can secure from external sources.
8. In June 2012, the borough council awarded a one-off grant of £82,000 to the Trust to assist it with capital improvements and help secure match funding from Sport England.
9. The Trust has now been invited by the council to put forward proposals for the further improvement of the Centre in order to maximise the building for the benefit of the community (see **Appendix A**). As a former naval facility, the building is, in some areas, much larger than many community leisure centres and has, therefore, the potential to host a wider range of services and activities.
10. As a result of discussions with both Dorset County Council and the Dorset Healthcare as a result of DCC's Living & Learning Community Offer initiative, the Trust is considering how underused parts of the sports centre can be adapted to host a range of health and wellbeing activities (relocating from other sites or delivered as outreach). This would enable use of the building to be maximised and result in both the creation of a 'hub' of community health and wellbeing services and also help generate more income for the Trust thereby making it financially more sustainable.

11. Discussions between all the partners with regard to the implementation of a Living & Learning community offer at the Osprey Sports Centre are still at an early stage, however, if the borough council were to award £65,000 for this project, then a grant agreement with the Trust can be finalised once the Trust has submitted satisfactory details of proposed improvements and how it could support a wider range of health and wellbeing activities.
12. To date, the Trust has already demonstrated its willingness to accommodate other services and at present it rents out space to Muntsy's, a day service for adults with learning disabilities.
13. Other plans that the Trust has in order to develop its community offer include:
 - Subdividing the very large sports hall in order to accommodate activities such as martial arts and short mat bowls whilst retaining space for football, cricket and badminton.
 - Adapting the old 'boat house' area as a fitness studio and utilising the existing studio for new health services.
14. If the committee were to agree to support the Trust, then any grant would be subject to both a legal agreement (using the council's standard grant agreement template) and the provision of satisfactory details of both the works to be undertaken and community services to be provided. No grant funding would be released in advance of the project's commencement.
15. In summary, discussions regarding the role of the Osprey Leisure Centre in the county council's Living & Learning Community Offer initiative on Portland have the potential to develop the Centre's capacity to host a wider range of community health and wellbeing services. The borough council funding requested from the Trust could, therefore, help lever in additional capital investment from organisations such as the county council and Dorset Healthcare, and contribute to more cost-effective and joined-up community services for Portland.

Implications

16. **Corporate Plan.** *Empowering Thriving and Inclusive Communities.* The council's support will enable the South Dorset Community Sports Trust Ltd to operate effectively for the benefit of the community.
17. **Financial.** The council does not have a budget for grants to support community sports projects. Any additional financial support for the Trust 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.
18. However, investing in the Centre in a way that both helps secure additional funding from other organisations and attracts more users, will ensure its long-term sustainability without the requirement for local authority subsidy.

19. **Equalities.** The Centre also offers very affordable rates of admission and membership in order to ensure that cost is not a barrier to participation.
20. **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.
21. **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 Trust and this will require evidence of expenditure before any funding is released.

Consultation and Engagement

22. Consultation on the recommendations in this report has been undertaken with the briefholder for Community Facilities, Cllr Kate Wheller, and the local members, Cllr Kimber and Cllr West.

Appendices

23. Appendix A. Letter from the South Dorset Sports Trust Ltd. 14th July 2017.

Background Papers

24. None.

Footnote

25. 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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