

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**SPORT, LEISURE & CULTURE
CABINET MEMBER**

LEISURE GRANT AID

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To consider revising the criteria for Sports Grants.
- 1.2 To determine an application deadline for Leisure Capital Grants
- 1.3 The key points of the report are as follows.
 - The council has a revenue grant programme for sports. We plan to improve the way we support talented local athletes.
 - We have received a budget for capital grant aid for 2011/12. Consideration needs to be given to setting an application deadline.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 Sports Grant Aid

2.1.1 The council has an adopted grant scheme for small grants for sport:

- For sports grant aid to individuals, the scheme helps athletes selected to national teams/squads with travel and training costs up to a maximum of £250. Only those sports recognised by Sport England are eligible
- For grants to groups, the scheme helps small sports projects. Normally, the maximum award is 90% of project costs, up to a maximum of £600

2.2 Leisure Capital Grants Programme

2.2.1 This is for community based sport, arts or heritage projects of community benefit. Normally, the maximum award is 50% of project costs, up to a maximum grant of £15,000. For projects with a total capital cost in excess of £60,000 groups could be eligible for one grant of up to £30,000 in any five year period.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 The opportunity exists to amend the sports grant scheme to better support talented athletes to develop their sporting careers and demonstrate support to

the Olympic legacy. The cost of participating in sport at a national level including training and competition costs are recognised as financially demanding.

- 3.2 It is proposed to improve the standard grant of support to qualifying athletes participating only in those sports recognised by Sport England and living in North Lincolnshire to £500.
- 3.3 One of the difficulties faced by performance athletes is the cost of maintaining fitness levels. It is proposed to offer complimentary use of the council's fitness centres and casual/lane swimming in support of those athletes in receipt of the council's grant aid where there is capacity at the time of use (not peak times) and would not displace paying customers. This is to be reviewed after the staging of the 2012 Olympics.
- 3.4 In order to achieve this within the approved budget, revenue grants to sports clubs for all but meeting ongoing existing commitments to priority partnerships such as Sport Aid (Yorkshire and Humberside), Humber Sports Partnership etc would need withdrawing.
- 3.5 In order to offer fair opportunity for the available funds in the leisure capital grants programme, it is proposed to introduce an application deadline. As the funds have to be spent within the financial year it would be necessary for this to be relatively early in the year, but allow reasonable time to promote the availability of funds and for applicants to submit their bids. With this in mind a deadline of 1 July 2011 is proposed.
- 3.6 Options are limited to the following:
 - approving the changes to the grant schemes as described above;
 - retain the existing grant schemes or
 - offer grant support at a different level or in a different way.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1 The revisions to the sports and capital grant schemes proposed above allow the service to better meet the needs of applicants.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

5.1 Financial

5.1.1 The Leisure Capital Grant Programme budget for 2011/12 is £50,000. There are no prior commitments

5.1.2 The Sports Grant Aid budget for 2011/12 is £10,390. There are no prior commitments

5.2 Staffing, Property and IT

5.2.1 There are no implications for staffing, property or IT.

6. **OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 - CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)**

6.1 One of the benefits of increasing participation in active recreation is the opportunity to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. This is by using active recreation as a diversionary activity. Our grant aid schemes help facilitate increased participation.

6.2 There are no other related implications.

7. **OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION**

7.1 A lot of work is done to support the individuals applying for grant aid. They have worked hard to achieve success in their sports. They are often frustrated by their inability to raise sufficient funds and find it financially difficult once they achieve this level. They need a grant of sufficient proportions to help sustain their participation in national squads and help with accessing local opportunities to maintain fitness.

8. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 That the Cabinet Member approves a change in the sports grant aid criteria:

- To improve the standard grant of support to qualifying athletes participating only in those sports recognised by Sports England and living in North Lincolnshire to £500
- Withdraw revenue grants to sports clubs for all but priority partnerships

8.2 Offer complimentary use of the council's fitness centres and casual/lane swimming in support of those athletes in receipt of the council's grant aid where there is capacity at the time of use (not at peak times) and would not displace paying customers

8.3 That the Cabinet Member approves the introduction of an application deadline for Leisure Capital Grants of 1 July 2011

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report
Leisure Services Grant Aid – Application pack