

# STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

## Cabinet

8 February 2022

<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>Sports Grants Scheme</b>
<b>PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	<b>Councillor Mark Deaville - Deputy Leader &amp; Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Sports</b>
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>Cathy Hinde - Service Development Officer (Leisure and Recreation)</b>
<b>WARDS INVOLVED:</b>	<b>All</b>

### 1. Reason for the Report

- 1.1 To confirm the changes made to the Sports Grants criteria.

### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Cabinet approves the changes made by the Staffordshire Moorlands Sports Council to the sports grant criteria.

### 3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 The Staffordshire Moorlands Sports Grants programme supports delivery of 'Towards an Active Staffordshire Moorlands' which is the physical activity and sport strategy for the District. The strategy aims to build active communities, including helping to develop a strong club network through one of its main aims: 'Supporting our existing sports club and voluntary sector base to build local capacity and strengthen their community offer and encourage diversity'
- 3.2 Key priority groups are also highlighted in the strategy and include people in lower socio-economic groups and those with disabilities. We know these groups participate in sports and physical activity significantly less than those from higher and middle socioeconomic groups and people living without a disability.
- 3.3 The sports grants scheme has been operating in the Moorlands since 2016, with the same categories as today. The Council currently has an annual grant funding pot of £16,000 to be allocated across all the categories.
- 3.4 To help align the sports grants criteria more closely to strategy priorities, the Staffordshire Moorlands Sports Council approved a change to the criteria at a

meeting on 22 October 2019 which required individual athletes applying for a sport grant to provide proof they are either registered as disabled or in receipt of means tested benefits. The updated criteria has been in operation since May 2020.

- 3.5 Prior to these changes, grants were available to individual athletes, coaches and clubs but for individual athletes there was no eligibility criteria based on financial or disability status. This resulted in a disproportionate amount of funds being allocated to individual athletes, 33 out of a total of 49, further detail on these grants is provided at 6.3.
- 3.5 Since the changes set out in 3.4 have been made, there has been a significant shift in grant allocation as detailed below which demonstrates the allocation of sports grants monies are now more evenly aligned to our strategic priorities than before. The detail of funding provided in 2020-21 is detailed at 6.5.
- 3.6 Covid19 put a swift halt to the vast majority of sports participation and the gradual easing of restrictions enabled sports clubs to return to activity. New operating measures were required and it was important that the Council responded and offered practical and financial support to help activity return in the Moorlands where possible.
- 3.7 In response, a new grant entitled 'Return to Activity' was created and approved by the Sports Council on 16 July 2020. The return to activity grant is available to clubs, coaches and athletes to help sports in our District recover and reinvent from the Covid-19 pandemic, helping to purchase PPE or additional equipment to be able to offer covid secure environments.
- 3.7 Through the grant window of 2020/21, Return to Activity grants were awarded to a range of 17 different sports clubs with nearly £6,000 funds allocated to help them to assist restart activities in their communities.

#### 4. **Alternative Options**

- 4.1 There are two options available to the council:
  - 1. To return to the previous criteria. Prior to this criteria change, a large percentage of the grants available were allocated to individual athletes, rather than being allocated more equally between clubs or coaches who arguably have a greater reach and impact on the community. Not permitting the return to activity criteria would have a negative impact on those clubs, coaches and athletes **(Not recommended)**.
  - 2. To accept the changed funding criteria enabling the Return to Activity criteria to continue to be acceptable in the awards of sports grants until the end of the covid pandemic or a time when it is deemed to no longer be required. This will ensure that our sporting communities are able to address additional pressures and costs in re-establishing activity **(Recommended)**.

## 5. Implications

- 5.1 Community Safety - (Crime and Disorder Act 1998)  
None
- 5.2 Workforce  
None
- 5.3 Equality and Diversity/Equality Impact Assessment  
The changes have a positive impact on diversity and equality in our district in specifically advocating funding individuals who are registered disabled or are in receipt of means tested benefits.
- 5.4 Financial Considerations  
None. The budget available for allocation for grants has not changed.
- 5.5 Legal  
None
- 5.6 Climate Change  
None
- 5.7 Consultation  
None
- 5.8 Risk Assessment  
None

Mark Trillo

**Executive Director (Governance & Commissioning)**

### **Web Links and Background Papers**

None

### **Contact details**

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Recreation)  
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## 6. Detail

- 6.1 The Staffordshire Moorlands sports grants programme has been operating for a number of years supporting the contribution that sports coaches, clubs and athletes make in the development of sporting opportunities within the Staffordshire Moorlands. Grants are available to help with the financial

demands of training, learning, developing skills and competing in sports which are recognised by Sport England.

- 6.2 The sports grants programme supports delivery of 'Towards an Active Staffordshire Moorlands' – the physical activity and sport strategy for the District. The strategy aims to build active communities, including helping to develop a strong club network through one of its main aims: 'Supporting our existing sports club and voluntary sector base to build local capacity and strengthen their community offer and encourage diversity'
- 6.3 Prior to the changes made in 2019, grants were available to individual athletes, coaches and clubs. For individual athletes there was no eligibility criteria based on financial or disability status, this resulted in a disproportionate amount of funds being allocated to individual athletes, as illustrated below:

#### **Sport grant allocation 2019/20**

Clubs: 4 grants = £1,395  
Coaches: 12 grants = £3,215  
Athletes: 33 grants = £9,780  
**Total = £14,390**

- 6.4 At a meeting of the Staffordshire Moorlands Sports Council on 22 October 2019, the decision was made to amend the criteria and level up the amount of funding awarded to the different priority groups, to come into effect when the grants application window opened again in May 2020.
- 6.5 Since the changes have been made there has been a significant shift in grant allocations, with a more even proportion being allocated to coaches and clubs where arguably a greater impact on participations levels can be made.

#### **Sport grant allocation 2020/2021**

Clubs: 10 grants = £3,029  
Coaches: 12 grants = £3,030  
Athletes: 6 grants = £2,714  
**Total = £8,774**

- 6.6 From March 2020 onwards, the operation of sports clubs/activities were seriously affected due to the Covid19 outbreak. Initially many clubs closed their doors and, even when restrictions allowed, clubs faced many operational challenges and significant additional costs to ensure they were providing a covid secure environment for participants.
- 6.7 Upon the easing of restrictions and reopening of opportunities for sports clubs it was important that the Council offered practical and financial support to help sporting activity return as best as possible across in the Moorlands.
- 6.8 The proposal for a new 'Return to Activity' grant was discussed and approved by the Staffordshire Moorlands Sports Council in July 2020. Initially this grant

was advertised until the 31 December 2020, but following ongoing restrictions being put in place by government, this was further extended to a point whereby the Return to Activity grant is still available to access.

- 6.9 Through the grant window of 2020/21 the Council supported 17 clubs with nearly £6,000 allocated. The grants have been invaluable to many clubs, for example it allowed Rudyard Sailing Club to buy additional safety equipment to enable boats to be used as single cox and thus continuing sailing.
- 6.10 The 2021-22 grant fund is still open to applications and given the continued uncertainty as a result of the covid pandemic it is recommended that this remains until at least the close of the current grant window at the end of February 2022, with the ability to extend this for a longer period depending on whether further support is required.