

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
FINANCE, HOUSING AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

9 OCTOBER 2013

NORTH COAST LEISURE CENTRE

Report by Director Education Culture & Sport

Agenda Item	11.
Report No	FHR/ 124/13

Summary

This report requests approval for a contribution of £15,000 from the Capital Discretionary Fund to complete the funding package that would enable the replacement and up-grading of essential plant, equipment and facilities at the North Coast Leisure Centre in Bettyhill.

1. Background

- 1.1 Tongue & Farr Sports Association initially raised the funding to build and has been operating the North Coast Leisure Centre since 1995. The centre provides access to swimming, sport and leisure services and activities for all age ranges of residents and visitors to the area.
- 1.2 The Council currently provides a revenue grant of £42,657 to the organisation. The need for financial constraint has meant that the level of Council support has not increased for several years and will be reduced by 3% in 2014/15. The Centre attracts, on average, 15,000 users each year and employs 5 FTE staff. The organisation is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status.
- 1.3 The organisation has a very good track record of securing funding from external sources for projects to reduce costs and develop the centre, for example, it was the first swimming pool in Britain to be heated by biomass. More recently, funding from LEADER and other sources, has allowed the appointment of a member of staff to grow and “green” the business and make it more sustainable in the longer term, for example, by providing outreach health/fitness classes in other locations in North West Sutherland and developing relationships with the NHS to provide post-operative and therapeutic services.
- 1.4 To allow this to happen, there is an urgent need to replace and up-grade plant and equipment that is nearly 20 years old and to undertake essential up-grading of the facilities that has affected operational efficiency and has increasingly had an impact on the fabric of the building. The organisation has been working for a considerable length of time to try and secure funding for the work while incurring the additional expenditure associated with nursing failing systems through a number of crises. In January 2013, for example, the Education, Culture and Sport Service provided a grant of £500 towards the cost of emergency repairs to allow the centre to remain open at that time.

2. Project Costs & Funding

- 2.1 The project is to replace and up-grade plant and equipment to increase flexibility of use and achieve operational efficiencies that can contribute to the longer term

sustainability of the centre. Details of the cost and proposed funding package are provided in the following tables.

COST

Replacement of Calorex air/water handling system	£24,520
Installation of water handling heat exchanger	2,040
New chemical controller system	5,912
Acid Wash and pool re-grout, energy saving lights, sauna reclining and controls	9,819
UV pool disinfection system	12,397
Total	£54,688

FUNDING

Caithness & North Sutherland Fund	£21,866	Secured
Highlands & Islands Enterprise	13,225	Secured
NHS Challenge Fund	882	Secured
Ward Discretionary Budget Highland Council	3,715	Secured
Capital Discretionary Fund	15,000	Applied for
Total	£54,688	

- 2.2 Ward 1 Members fully support the project and agreed to contribute £3,715 towards it from the discretionary budget on 12th August 2013. There is evidence of strong community support for the retention and continued development of the centre.
- 2.3 The application is for a grant of £15,000 from the Capital Discretionary Fund to allow the work to proceed. The organisation has secured approximately 73% of the funding required and has made several unsuccessful bids for funding. A review of the funding sources approached would suggest that, at present, there does not appear to be any other reasonable or realistic sources of funding for the project.
- 2.4 The project demonstrates a good fit with a number of commitments in the Programme for the Highland Council for example, The Economy, No 4: Children & Young People, No 10, Empowering our Communities, Nos 7 & 8.

3. Implications

- 3.1 No additional resource, legal, equality and climate change and risk implications have been identified.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 Members are asked to approve a contribution of £15,000 for the project from the Capital Discretionary Fund.

Signature:

Designation: Director Education Culture and Sport

Author: Jeannie Graham

Date: 4th September 2013