

Chief Executive Taking Non-Executive Decisions Under Emergency Powers – 24th March 2021	Electoral Ward Affected ALL
Report submitted by: Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Customer Services	
Portfolio Holder: Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture	
National Leisure Recovery Fund	

1. Summary

- 1.1 As part of Central Government’s commitment to supporting the Economic stimulus and long term sustainability of the Economy and Leisure industry, in December 2020 they announced funding via Sport England. The National Leisure Recovery Fund (NLRF) is to support Local Authority Leisure Assets between January – March 2021.

2. Decision Required

- 2.1 Council is recommended to:

- (i) Successful application, accept the grant of £322,139 from Sport England.
- (ii) Accept the Grant conditions set out by Sport England.
- (iii) Reallocate the Grant to Leisure Operators GLL (Better), using and amending the Council’s Grant Process and Procedures to ensure the proposed phased plan for both Fulwood and West View long term sustainability in accordance with the grant application.

3. Information

- 3.1 Since the Covid 19 pandemic and the first Government National Lockdown in March 2020, there has been no Government Financial packages available to the Leisure Industry until this most recent announcement of the National Leisure Recovery Fund (Dec 2020).
- 3.2 Due to the lack of Government direct support to date, to the Leisure Industry, GLL (Better) had to make some difficult decisions pre, during and post all National Lockdowns. GLL have continued to provide a reduced Leisure offer at Fulwood Leisure centre in line with the Government Tier System and Covid Guidelines.

- 3.3 In terms of West View Leisure Centre GLL made the decision not to open at any point since the first lockdown in March 2020, based on their business model and projected levels of income and expenditure during the pandemic.
- 3.4 GLL have continued to lobby Central Government along with other National Leisure providers and Local Authorities officers and representatives have also lobbied through the LGA.
- 3.5 This proposed first round of the NLRF will look to support those Leisure facilities that can demonstrate long term sustainable facilities. The application process opened on 24 December 2020 and closed on 15 January 2021.

4. Implications

4.1 Finance Implications

- 4.1.1 The Council will receive a grant totalling £322,139 which is subject to conditions set out within the Grant Agreement. There are three parts to the grant allocation. The main allocation is £300,000 which is to be used as per the Recovery Plan included with the Grant Agreement. A grant of £1,542 is also made to cover the costs of Monitoring and Evaluation and this will be used to cover the costs of access to the IT systems being used to collect performance data about the use and effectiveness of the grant. The final allocation of £20,597 is an additional Top-Up award that can be used to assist further with costs being experienced with the extended COVID-19 lockdown period.
- 4.1.2 The grant is to be utilised to fund four months of operating costs as per the Recovery Plan, but due to the risk of further COVID-19 restrictions, we have up to a twelve month period during which there have been no further relevant COVID-19 restrictions, or two years, from the date of the grant agreement to spend the grant which ever date falls earlier.
- 4.1.3 Preston City Council has not yet received the funding from Sport England, but it is expected within 21 days of signing of the Grant Agreement. The funding will be passed to GLL no sooner than the Council receives the grant from Sport England and no sooner than the Grant Agreement between GLL and Preston City Council is signed.
- 4.1.4 Preston City Council is the body who has been awarded the funding and is therefore the accountable body. The Council will be required to provide monitoring information and progress reports to Sport England.

4.2 Legal Implications

- 4.2.1 The Council's grant application to Sport England makes clear that the Leisure Centres are let on 125 year leases to GLL and there is no management contract for either centre between the Council and GLL as they were sold as businesses which were going concerns in May 2017. This had to be done to avoid the possibility of any grant being clawed back if the Council's application was successful.

4.2.2 The Council will enter into a Grant Funding Agreement with GLL to ensure that the grant is spent in accordance with the aims and objectives expressed In the Council's grant application to Sport England.

4.2.3 Officers in legal and finance have reviewed the grant conditions and are satisfied that there is no adverse risk to the Council in accepting the grant.

4.3 HR Implications

4.3.1 There are no HR implications.

5. Impact Statement

5.1 Service Users

5.1.1 The grant will help the long term sustainability of both Fulwood Leisure centre and West View Leisure centre. The centres will offer services to hard to reach and priority communities from the BAME, Deprived, Disability, Communities with long term health conditions and those recovery from the impact of Covid 19.

5.2 Council Plans and Services

5.2.1 The phased re-opening of West View Leisure centre and the continued leisure offer at Fulwood Leisure centre.

5.3 Fair employment

5.3.1 This report has no direct impact on the Council's Fair Employment Policy, but will support GLL to employ staff at both Leisure centres.

5.4 Equality Impacts of Service Changes / New Services

5.4.1 The Council will continue to work with the Leisure operators GLL to ensure the long term sustainability of the city Leisure offer.

5.4.2 The Grant is to ensure the reopening and longer term sustainability of both Fulwood and West View Leisure centres which are in the hear of our key communities.

5.4.3 West View Leisure centre is located on the East of the city in our most deprived wards and serves a number of key priority groups which has been impacted on the most due to Covid 19. The centre will provide key support and physical activity for people from the BAME, Deprivation, People with a disability and people with long term health conditions, it is vital these centres reopen for all.

6. Risk Assessment

- 6.1 A risk assessment for the assets is with GLL as the Leisure operator and is also included within the GRACE risk Register.

7. Reasons For Decision

- 7.1 To enable the Council to secure external funding to support our leisure operator in the long term sustainability of the city leisure centres.

8. Alternative Options Considered And Rejected

- 8.1 The option of not accepting the grants was considered and rejected as the schemes offer significant value for money for the Council which will support the Leisure Operator and the sustainability of their Leisure centres.

Background Documents:

Background documents open to inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972:

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Ext
		Parks 906222

Contact for further information:

Stephen Daley

Chief Executive Taking Non-Executive Decisions Under Emergency Powers

Decision Taken:

National Leisure Recovery Fund

Decision taken, in accordance with the recommendation(s) and reason(s) set out in the report?

Yes/No *

Decision taken other than in accordance with the recommendation(s) set out in the report ?

Yes/No *

Insert details of the decision taken and reason(s) for decision

Any alternative option(s) other than those set out in the report considered and rejected

Yes/No*

Insert details of the alternative option(s) considered and rejected

Conflict of Interest:-

Has there been a conflict of interest declared by any Member in relation to the business/decision in this report?

Yes/No *

Insert name of Member(s)

.....

Chief Executive

Date: Insert