

Wincanton Sports Ground – Funding Contribution

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Purpose of the Report

To consider the reallocation of funds to Wincanton Recreational Trust as a contribution towards governance review of the organisational set ups at Wincanton Sports Ground.

Public Interest

To assist Wincanton Sports Ground, a significant local facility, by reviewing the current management arrangements and recommending options which will help sustain the sports facilities in the future.

Recommendation

That a contribution of £1,800 from the Members' Discretionary budget is reallocated to the governance review, subject to a contribution of 11% (to a maximum of £200) from WRT.

Background

In June 2015, Members considered an allocation of £1,840 from the Members' Discretionary budget for Wincanton Recreational Trust (WRT) as a contribution towards a Sports Development Officer post, which could support a programme of sports activities for one year – this followed a successful pilot, wholly funded by the WRT. Members approved this funding but as a result of difficulties recruiting to the post, the SSDC funding was not drawn down and is no longer required for this purpose. However, there continues to be a need for SSDC support to review the future management arrangements.

Previous funding support

With the exception of the £1,800 referred to above, there have been no payments in respect of Wincanton Sports Ground over £200.

Current Situation

The organisational structures at the Sports Ground (which were put in place in 1993) comprise two distinct elements, the first a charity which owns the land, the other a management committee, a company limited by guarantee. This structure is not necessarily the best way to ensure the future viability of the facilities going forward e.g. it can be less appealing for volunteers to come forward to help with running the facilities and it has a bigger obligation towards business rates than might otherwise be the case. Following close liaison with both organisations over the last few months, it has become clear that there is a willingness to review the current model with a view to putting in place arrangements which minimize financial burdens and give the best opportunity to apply for external funding opportunities as they arise. Working closely with SSDC officers a brief has been prepared, the purpose of which is to:

- gain a better understanding of the needs of key user groups both existing and prospective (natural catchment c5 miles) of the Sports Ground.
- produce options for operating the facility in a way that fosters ownership by user groups, the town and the surrounding area.

It is suggested that the £1,800 allocated in June 2015 towards Sports Development Officer post is now reallocated so that it becomes the main funding source for the governance review subject to the following:

- SSDC involvement in the selection of a suitable consultant
- Payment to be made retrospectively on production of receipted invoice
- Review to be completed by March 2016

In parallel with this work, WRT are beginning to investigate options to realise the value of some of their land.

Financial Implications

A sum of £10,200 remains unallocated in the Members' Discretionary Budget, as this is a request for funds to be reallocated from the Wincanton Recreational Trust Sports Development Officer to a Governance Review, unallocated balances will not change.

Corporate Priority Implications

Focus Four: Health & Communities: encouraging communities to be healthy, self-reliant and with individuals who are willing to help each other.

Carbon Emissions & Climate Change Implications

Providing local access to a range of activities and services reducing the need to travel which therefore reduces carbon emissions.

Equality and Diversity Implications

The loss of services designed to meet the needs of the most disadvantaged in target communities is likely to have a significant effect over time.

Background Papers: *Area East Committee Agenda & Minutes June 2015*