



<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Causeway Coast &amp; Glens Sports Grants Programme</b>
<b>Committee Report Submitted To:</b>	<b>The Leisure &amp; Development Committee</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>17 January 2023</b>
<b>For Decision or For Information</b>	<b>For Decision</b>

<b>Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)</b>	
Strategic Theme	Healthy and Engaged Communities
Outcome	Citizens will have access to a range of leisure, recreational, green and play environments which support better physical and mental health and wellbeing
Lead Officer	Head of Sport & Wellbeing

<b>Budgetary Considerations</b>	
Cost of Proposal	
Included in Current Year Estimates	<b>YES/NO</b>
Capital/Revenue	
Code	
Staffing Costs	

<b>Screening Requirements</b>	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	N/A	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	No	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

## **1.0 Purpose of Report**

**The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the standardisation of a Sports Grant Programme for the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council.**

## **2.0 Background**

Council has in the past facilitated two schemes whereby individuals and clubs can access sports facilities and funding support for the betterment of their individual / collective participation in sport at a competitive and local level.

- Elite Athlete Scheme - Support for local athletes who would be competing at an elite level of excellence in their chosen sport. Providing Free access to Leisure / Sports facilities for the purpose of advancing the individual's training requirements for high level competition. Scheme restricted to qualification criteria and eligibility assessed annually.
- Sports Grants – Funding support for sporting organisations / individuals for the development of a sporting club or an individual's participation in high level competition. Funding administered via a separately constituted Sports Advisory Committee (SAC) in each legacy borough area.

In June 2022 Council approved officers' request to standardise the Elite Athlete scheme with one application process for the whole Borough as opposed to the pre-existing legacy application format. Although the legacy schemes were quite similar, a preliminary review noted the potential for inconsistencies. The proposed change was designed to create a consistent approach which would support local athletes competing at an elite level of excellence in their chosen sport.

To date the availability of funding for sporting participation and club development across the Borough has continued to follow the pre-existing legacy Council schemes whereby Clubs / Individuals affiliated to Local SAC's can apply for funding for a range of support categories including;

- Travel and assistance - to support attendance at competitions or training.
- Events - help towards the cost of delivering a sporting event in the area.
- Coaching - funding to support participation in governing body courses, officials qualifications and personal development workshops.
- Equipment - to support club development and the hosting of events.
- Seeding - financial assistance towards the development of new sports clubs.
- Sports club anniversary - assistance for clubs celebrating special anniversaries.

Local SAC's are constituted organisations separate from Council, but which were in receipt of funding from the legacy Councils on an annual basis. This money was then utilised for the purpose of each Sports Advisory Committee's support programme. This money continues to be provided by Council on an annual basis.

As per the situation with the legacy Elite Athlete scheme, whilst there are similarities in the approach of the SAC's to funding support, the potential for inconsistencies is noted. There is also an opportunity for individual sports persons to apply for funding on multiple occasions if they are members of different clubs in two or more legacy areas. Eligibility to apply is dependent on a sporting club being affiliated to the Local SAC's thereby exposing each committee to questions over the equal accessibility to support across the whole borough.

## **3.0 Current position**

Officers have engaged with representatives of the four SAC's in an endeavour to reach a consensus on the way forward for the administration of a single Grant Programme for Sports Clubs and Individuals that can meet the local need and follow best practice established within CCG for the administration and audit of Council monies.

A number of meetings have taken place and briefings have been given to SAC representatives by Council's Funding Manager as to the potential options available for grant awards;

- Option 1 - Local SAC's apply to the Council on an annual basis for money which they continue to administer (independently of Council officer support) and subject to full audit by the Funding Unit in respect of how the funds and grants are awarded.
- Option 2 – The Funding Unit administers the Grant Programme on behalf of Council with a standardised process for applications, assessed and reported to Council in line with the existing Council Grants programme.

Whilst there is an acknowledgement of the benefit of one centralised grant process (Option 2), concerns have been raised regarding the loss of local knowledge in the sporting community in each area and a lack of local contact may deter people from applying for grants.

- Reassurance has been given regarding the promotion of the grant programme - Council's Sports Development section would be the point of contact for all clubs / individuals likely to apply for grants and this will be promoted across the Borough.
- The Funding Unit already signpost requests for financial support to Council's Sports Development section which has knowledge of both local and regional funding opportunities.
- Council's Funding Unit annually holds Workshops for local community groups etc across the Borough for the existing grant programmes and can adapt accordingly with the support of the Sports Development Team in explaining the process to the sporting community.
- The existing SAC's would have input into the initial standardisation of Grant funding criteria which can take account of local influencing factors for sports activities in their area.

Other concerns have been raised regarding the future of the SAC's and the loss of local input into the development of sport and participation in the Borough.

- Whilst it is acknowledged that the transfer of the funding / grant process would result in a dissolution of the Local SAC's, it is proposed that Council officers work towards the establishment of a CCG Sports Forum. Membership of that Forum would include representatives of the Local SACs to ensure transfer of that local knowledge to date (Terms of Reference to be developed and brought back to Council for further consideration).
- Hosting of forum meetings to move around the borough to engage with all areas/communities ensuring a level of inclusion; similar to the structure used by Council's community development section.

Following the engagement sessions with the SAC representatives a majority consensus has been reached by 3 of the SAC's as to progressing with Option 2, with the establishment of a CCG Sports Forum. The remaining SAC would prefer to remain with Option 1.

#### **4.0 Next Steps**

Whilst Officers would prefer a full consensus in terms of how to move forward, it is considered unsustainable to continue with the current method of delivering funds to local sports clubs

and individuals. Having reached a majority decision, it is deemed appropriate to progress with Option 2, following standard screening processes for Section 75 and Rural Need.

There is agreement on the continued value of an Annual Sports Awards which CCG has hosted to recognise local sporting achievements. Previously nominations would have been received from each of the Local SAC's, following their own Local Awards Ceremonies. Officers will devise a nomination system suitable for the Borough wide format which will be promoted across the Borough in advance of a November 2023 Awards Evening.

## **5.0 Recommendations**

Members are asked to note the above and recommend for approval the Causeway Coast and Glens Sports Grant Programme (Option 2), subject to Section 75 / Rural Needs assessment processes.

- The grant programme will be reviewed after the first year to ensure there have been no implementation issues and reports to Council will be via the standard Funding Unit report mechanism.
- Officers will work towards the establishment of a CCG Sports Forum with a further report to come back to Committee for consideration.