

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive

CAPITAL GRANT REQUEST – EASTWOOD TENNIS CLUB1. Purpose of report

To consider a request for capital grant aid in accordance with the provisions of the Council's grant aid policy.

2. Grant Aid Application

An application for capital funding has been received from Eastwood Tennis Club towards the refurbishment of courts and installation of new flood lights at their facility on Church Walk in Eastwood.

Improving the courts playing surface and providing floodlights would enable longer playing hours throughout the year, in particular for junior coaching and social tennis from October to March. The total cost of the scheme is in excess of £100,000. Further details of the application are included in the appendix.

Eastwood Tennis Club initially requested grant aid of up to £50,000 towards the cost of the renovation. Given the nature of this scheme, any approved grant would normally be given on the basis of 25% of the actual costs incurred (given that it relates to a non-Council owned asset) with a maximum figure specified in appropriate circumstances. Eastwood Tennis Club has indicated that if Members were to support the request at 25% (i.e. up to £25,000) any shortfall would be sought from other funding providers.

3. Financial Position

No budgetary provision exists for capital grants to voluntary organisations and there are insufficient funds left in Capital Contingencies to support this application. If this request was supported, Members would need to make an addition to the Capital Programme 2021/22 to meet the cost of any capital grant award to Eastwood Tennis Club. This would have to be funded from General Fund Capital Receipts (if available) or from General Fund reserves.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to CONSIDER the request and RESOLVE accordingly.

Background papers

Nil

APPENDIX**EASTWOOD TENNIS CLUB**

A request for capital grant funding has been received from Eastwood Tennis Club towards the refurbishment of courts and installation of new flood lights.

The Club was formed around 1900 and is based on Church Walk in Eastwood. The Club currently serves around 60 members of all ages from Eastwood and the surrounding areas.

The principal aim of the Club is to provide tennis facilities and coaching for adults and children, delivered in both a social and competitive environment. This activity will provide service users with all the benefits of participating in sport, including health and well-being, improved fitness and co-ordination, social and recreation and instilling respect for others. The club has seen an increase in the subscriptions received from members, with several new players joining, possibly due to them appreciating the benefits of being active following the pandemic.

Junior players benefit from regular coaching groups, enabling them to keep fit, healthy and occupied. The coaching provided continues to be developed to focus on junior players with participation across most age ranges. Junior coaching is provided after school and weekends and with tennis camps during school holidays. The coaching is available at modest expense to both members and non-members.

Eastwood Tennis Club would now like to complete an ambitious scheme to refurbish its existing tennis courts and install new floodlights to increase number of playing hours available throughout the year. Its current provision of four courts are well beyond their life and in need of refurbishment. By improving the playing surface and providing floodlights will enable longer playing hours throughout the year with children's coaching and social tennis after school from October to March.

The cost of the court refurbishment programme is around £50,000 (including VAT). The club has made enquiries as to the cost and types of surfaces and the possibility option of changing to carpet (AstroTurf) from the macadam surface.

The club is looking to increase its membership by offering all-year round tennis throughout the week and the provision of floodlighting is key to this. Whilst the club has always been open for play all year round, inevitably weekday evening play from autumn through to spring is non-existent. Extending the playing hours will enable after school coaching to continue. The estimated cost of installing LED, non-intrusive flood lighting for the four courts is around £50,000 (including VAT).

The overall cost of both schemes, including ancillaries such as planning fees, professional fees and installation would be around £104,000 (including VAT). It would be preferable to have the lights installed at the time the courts are resurfaced, however if this could not be achieved the cabling for the lighting should be placed in situ when the re-surfacing is done.

The club has some reserves from subscriptions and donations received over the years to potentially match the grant funding sought. Whilst the club has received some positive soundings regarding funding, all other funding requests have been declined so far, including an application to Sport England which was rejected due to funds available.

For the year ended 31 March 2021, total income amounted to £25,990 (£3,649 in 2019/20) which mainly related to Covid-19 grants (£23,953), subscriptions, match fees and other income. Expenditure for the year totalled £720 (£3,649 in 2019/20) and was mainly in respect of utilities, court maintenance and other running costs. Total cash and bank balances as at 31 March 2021 increased significantly to £53,503 (£28,233 in 2020) mainly due to grants received.

The Council has previously supported Eastwood Tennis Club with funding towards revenue and capital projects with the last award of £728 in 2016/17 being towards the cost of providing floodlit courts (at alternative venues) so that it can continue with its junior coaching sessions during the winter months.

For 2021/22, Eastwood Tennis Club has requested grant aid of up to £50,000 (50%) towards the refurbishment of courts and installation of new flood lights at their facilities. Given the nature of this scheme, any approved grant would normally be given on the basis of 25% (i.e. up to £25,000) of the actual costs incurred (given that it relates to a Council owned asset) with a maximum figure specified in appropriate circumstances. The club has indicated that if Members were to support the request at a lower level, any shortfall would be sought from alternative funding providers.

No budgetary provision exists for capital grants to voluntary organisations and there are insufficient funds in Capital Contingencies 2021/22 to support this request. If this request was supported, Members would need to make an addition to the Capital Programme 2021/22 to meet the cost of any capital grant award to Eastwood Tennis Club. This would have to be funded from General Fund Capital Receipts (if available) or from General Fund reserves.