

RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION TAKEN BY AN EXECUTIVE MEMBER

This form **MUST** be used to record any decision taken by the Elected Mayor or an individual Executive Member (Portfolio Holder).

The form must be completed and passed to the Chief Officer Legal and Democratic Services no later than NOON on the second working day after the day on which the decision is taken. No action may be taken to implement the decision(s) recorded on this form until 7 days have passed and the Chief Officer Legal and Democratic Services has confirmed the decision has not been called in.

1. Description of decision

That acceptance of a grant of £242,800 offered by the English Sports Council for the provision of solar panels at Kempston Pool be approved.

2. Date of decision

19 March 2024

3. Reasons for decision

The Council pledged to become Carbon Neutral by 2030 and is eager to investigate renewable and energy efficient opportunities to achieve this target. The Swimming Pool Support Fund Phase 2 provides the Council with the opportunity to introduce renewable energy at the Kempston Swimming Pool, which along with the proposal to replace the fluorescent lighting, will deliver improvements that would otherwise be undeliverable without grant funding. These projects will assist in reducing the carbon emissions from the Kempston Swimming Pool site and reducing the cost of running the facility.

4. Alternatives considered and rejected

The alternative of not accepting the grant was considered and rejected since this would mean that the Council would not receive the benefits from this investment.

5. How decision is to be funded

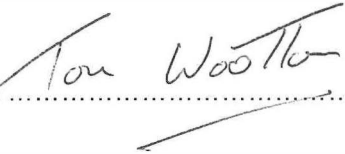
The decision is to accept the grant that will fund the project.

6. Conflicts of interest

Name of all Executive members who were consulted AND declared a conflict of interest.	Nature of interest	Did Standards Committee give a dispensation for that conflict of interest? (If yes, give details and date of dispensation)	Did the Chief Executive give a dispensation for that conflict of interest? (If yes, give details and the date of the dispensation).

The Mayor has been consulted on this decision

Not Applicable

Signed 

Date: 19 March 2024

Name of Decision Taker: Mayor Tom Wootton

This is a public document. A copy of it must be given to the Chief Officer Legal and Democratic Services as soon as it is completed.

Date decision published: ..19March2024.....

Date decision can be implemented if not called in:n/aexemptcallin.....

(Decision to be made exempt from call in.....YES.....)

Bedford Borough Council – Report to The Mayor

Date of Decision: 19 March 2024

Report by: Chief Officer for Regulatory Services and Culture

Subject: Acceptance of the Swimming Pool Support Fund Phase 2 Grant – Kempston Swimming Pool

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The Mayor is requested to approve the acceptance of a grant of £242,800 offered by the English Sports Council for the provision of solar panels at Kempston Pool.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 **That the Mayor considers and, if satisfied, agrees to approve the acceptance of a grant of £242,800 offered by the English Sports Council for the provision of solar panels at Kempston Pool.**

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

3.1 The Council pledged to become Carbon Neutral by 2030 and is eager to investigate renewable and energy efficient opportunities to achieve this target. The Swimming Pool Support Fund Phase 2 provides the Council with the opportunity to introduce renewable energy at the Kempston Swimming Pool, which along with the proposal to replace the fluorescent lighting, will deliver improvements that would otherwise be undeliverable without grant funding. These projects will assist in reducing the carbon emissions from the Kempston Swimming Pool site and reducing the cost of running the facility.

4. THE CURRENT POSITION

4.1 Kempston Swimming Pool is one of three swimming pools owned by Bedford Borough Council. Kempston Pool is of particular importance to our overall leisure provision because of the community it serves and its accessibility to swimming opportunities. The pool is located in the second most deprived ward in the Borough.

- 4.2 Built in 2006, investment has been made in Kempston pool to refurbish and to extend its local offering in the past 6 years. A new studio was added in 2017 with direct investment in the region of £200,000. The plant room also saw upgrades in the last 10 years.
- 4.3 The site currently has a mixture of LED and outdated T8 fluorescent and CFL lighting which is costly to run as well as maintain. Replacing the lighting with all new LED lamps will significantly improve the lighting levels, reduce the maintenance costs and reduce the electricity consumption for the site. There is budget provision for this work within the Leisure Sites Essential Works capital budget approved by Full Council in December 2023.
- 4.4 The Swimming Pool Support Fund will provide the funding for rooftop solar panels as well as improved metering and controls. The installation of Solar PV at Kempston will enable long term cost and energy efficiency savings for the life of the panels (25+years). Kempston Pool has a large, sloping roof with a total area of around 869m², the installation of a proposed 189kWp system will ensure maximum generation for this roof space and take advantage of the multiple roofs and minimise impacts from shading. The solar array will allow the site to become 36% self-sufficient from the grid, providing the council with the opportunity to invest in further energy efficiency technology and potentially battery storage at a later date to further decarbonise the site. It is expected that 116,429kWh energy will be saved by the solar array which is equal to 29.8tonnes CO₂ and around £39,000 annual savings on the site's electricity bill based on 2023/24 costs. As there may be periods of generation where there is no usage, there will be an opportunity to export the excess generation back to the grid, we will ensure to capture this through export metering and apply for the smart export guarantee.
- 4.5 The installation of additional metering and controls at the site will enable improved monitoring of the site's usage in the pool area, gym and central areas allowing for greater visibility to the maintenance and management of the site.

5. DETAILS

- 5.1 The government's Swimming Pool Support Fund (SPSF) provides a total of £60 million to local authorities in England as a support package for public leisure facilities with swimming pools and is split into two phases:
- **Phase I - Revenue:** £20m is available to support facilities with swimming pools with increased cost pressures, leaving them most vulnerable to closure or significant service reduction.
 - **Phase II - Capital:** £40m is available from the government for capital investment to improve the energy efficiency of public facilities with pools in the medium to long term.

5.2 The objectives of Phase II - Capital of the SPSF are to:

- Reduce the energy consumption level of facilities in receipt of funding, compared to baseline, and support the leisure sector to transition to a position of environmental and financial sustainability.
- Minimise the closure of swimming pool provision, where funding has been provided, to a site to prevent gaps in public leisure provision emerging.
- Reduce the carbon output of facilities in receipt of funding, compared to baseline, in line with the government's Net Zero by 2050 objectives.
- Prioritise support in those areas of greatest socio-economic need (as evidenced by IMD level), where all other factors are equal.

5.3 The Council has been awarded a total of £242,800 to fund Photo Voltaic (PV) panels, the installation of additional metering and provision of monitoring software at the Kempston Swimming Pool site. The grant will cover the cost of:

- Material costs.
- Installation costs associated with the intervention.
- Professional and technical project fees directly associated with the on-site construction/installation of the capital intervention; and
- Any required enabling works

5.4 The funding is subject to a number of funding conditions, which include:

- a) The project agreement, specification of works, cost plan and cost plan are subject to prior approval by Sport England.
- b) Sport England reserves the right to withhold up to 10% of the capital grant for a facility unless and until the following conditions are met in relation to moving communities (a Sport England initiative to improve sports participation), reporting, monitoring and Quest Environmental (Sport England's continuous improvement tool) management that the operators are required to meet. The Council's Leisure operator GLL has confirmed that it is prepared to fulfil these requirements.
- c) The Council will be required to note a restriction in favour of Sport England on the property title.

5.5 The grant is subject to clawback should the facility cease to be operated by the Council or its nominated operator for a period of 10 years.

5.6 Payment of the grant is made retrospectively after completion of the works. The deadline for draw down of the grant is 31 March 2025, which means that requests must be submitted by 28 February 2025. The Council is required to enter into the Funding Agreement before the end of March 2024.

6. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

6.1 The alternative of not accepting the grant was considered and rejected since this would mean that the Council would not receive the benefits from this investment.

7. KEY IMPLICATIONS

<p>7.1 Legal Issues</p>	<p>The General Power of Competence under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides the Council with the powers necessary to undertake its climate change objectives.</p> <p>The Climate Change Act commits the UK government by law to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 100% of 1990 levels (net zero) by 2050. The 100% target was based on advice from the Climate Change Committee's 2019 report, 'Net Zero – The UK's contribution to stopping global warming.'</p> <p>The Council is required to enter into a formal Funding Agreement with Sport England and this will be reviewed by the Legal Services team prior to signature.</p>
<p>7.2 Policy Issues</p>	<p>The Council's Corporate Plan 2022-2026, vision of the period of this Plan is:</p> <p>We want Bedford Borough to thrive as a place, that people are proud of, want to live in and move to. To do this we need a growing and strong local economy and an active response to climate change. From this foundation our residents will be able to thrive and realise their potential, supporting and celebrating our diverse and inclusive communities.</p> <p>Cross-Cutting Theme - Climate Change Emergency – to deliver what we need to do across all our services to address climate change.</p> <p>Sustainable Development and Environment Efficiency Strategy:</p> <p>Priority 1: Demonstrating Community Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support local communities to reduce energy costs and carbon emissions. • Support schools/academies in the Borough to reduce their energy and water use.

	<p>Priority 2: Building Community Resilience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support local communities to help them become resilient to the impacts of climate change. • Support the installation of low carbon buildings and communities within new and existing developments.
7.3 Resource Issues	<p>This Swimming Pool Support Fund Phase 2 funding enables the Council to invest in the Kempston Swimming Pool and add to energy efficiency proposals included within its own programme of works. This will have the benefit of reducing the running costs of this facility. It is expected that 116,429kWh energy will be saved by the solar array which is equal to 29.8tonnes CO2 and around £39k annual savings on the site's electricity bill based on 2023/24 costs.</p> <p>The programme of works will be project managed and monitored by the Council's Building Services team. Leisure sites are some of the highest consuming buildings on the councils' estate, but to date have not been included within the carbon reduction target due to being operated by a third party. The energy consumption is still monitored by the Council as the energy contracts are procured through the councils' utility providers. The cost of electricity doubled when the leisure sites were just coming out of the pandemic and trying to recover, this has meant that in order to keep these centres open, the council has had to offer financial support to our operator to pay the utility bills or be at risk of disconnection.</p>
7.4 Risks	<p>Should the acceptance of the grant not be approved, there is a risk that due to financial pressures on the authority it will make it more difficult for the Council to meet the carbon neutral 2030 pledge. This grant funding will allow the Council to deliver projects that may otherwise be undeliverable.</p>
7.5 Environmental Implications	<p>This grant funding will have a positive impact on the council and the wider environment by ensuring reduced carbon emissions from this facility. As the leisure sites are a vital part of the community in Bedford and Kempston, it is the Council's duty to ensure that these services are provided and are still serving the community in the best way possible. This fund will enable a huge boost to the local community as it is such a vast and visible project, with the potential to inspire local residents to look into renewable technology themselves.</p>

7.6 Equalities Impact	<p>In preparing this report, due consideration has been given to the Borough Council’s statutory Equality Duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, as set out in Section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>There are no equality and diversity implications in connection with the proposals that are set out in this report, and no differential impacts are reasonably foreseeable, although it should be noted that the pool is located in an area of relative deprivation.</p>
7.7 Impact on Families	<p>There are no direct impacts on families arising from the recommendations of this report, although the pool does provide benefits to local families.</p>
7.8 Community Safety and Resilience	<p>There are no direct impacts on community safety and resilience arising from the recommendations of this report</p>
7.9 Impact on Health and Wellbeing	<p>There are no direct impacts on health and well-being arising from the recommendations of this report, although the pool does provide local opportunities for sports participation.</p>

8. SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS AND OUTCOME

8.1 The following Council units or Officers and/or other organisations have been consulted in preparing this report:

Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture
 Chief Officer for Environment – Paul Pace
 Chief Officer for Finance – Rhain Bevan
 Interim Monitoring Officer – Lee Phanco
 Manager for Asset & Estate Management – Margaret Birtles
 Greenwich Leisure Limited

9. WARD COUNCILLOR VIEWS

9.1 Local Ward Members have been informed.

10. CONTACTS AND REFERENCES

Report Contact Officer	Sarah Hall, Chief Officer for Leisure and Culture
File Reference	Not applicable
Previous Relevant Minutes	None
Background Papers	None
Appendices	A: Swimming Pool Support Fund Funding Agreement