

CABINET

Free Swimming Programme 2nd September 2008

Report of Corporate Director (Regeneration)

PURPOSE OF REPORT				
To provide an update on the Free Swimming Programme as offered by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).				
Key Decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Non-Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Referral from Cabinet Member
Date Included in Forward Plan	1 st August 2008			
This report is public				

RECOMMENDATIONS OF COUNCILLOR FLETCHER

- (1) That Cabinet approve the receipt of an annual grant from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) of £44,375 per annum for financial years 2009/10 and 2010/11 in order to provide free swimming for those aged 60 or over.
- 2) That subject to Recommendation No. 1 being approved, the Head of Financial Services be authorised to update the General Fund Revenue Budget in both years to reflect the additional grant and associated expenditure as part of the 2009/10 Budget Process.
- (3) That Cabinet approve in principle the provision of free swimming for those aged 16 or below and submit an expression of interest for the scheme subject to the level of funding yet to be announced by the DCMS. Further details on implications for this would be reported back to Cabinet at the meeting of 7th October 2008.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Following the announcement by the DCMS earlier this year of the incentive to provide free swimming to juniors aged 16 or below and those aged 60 or above at swimming pools throughout the country, further details have now been received.
- 1.2 A circular dated 29th July 2008 was received from the DCMS which detailed the amount of funding that was to be allocated to Lancaster City Council for financial

years 2009/10 and 2010/11. The DCMS is keen to provide free swimming to the above age groups as part of a health initiative which builds on the theory that safe exercise is beneficial, with swimming seen as a particularly good form of exercise.

2.0 Proposal Details

- 2.1 A grant of £44,375 per annum for financial years 2009/10 and 2010/11 has been allocated to Lancaster City Council for the provision of free swimming to those aged 60 or over. Authorities who wish to participate in the free swimming offer must provide confirmation to the DCMS by September 15th 2008.
- 2.2 Authorities wishing to participate in the free swimming offer for those aged 16 or under must submit an expression of interest for this part of the programme by 15th September 2008. Government will then aim to provide details of the prospective allocation by 30th September 2008. Authorities will then be invited to confirm, by 15th October 2008, that they wish to participate in this element of the offer.
- 2.3 Taking up the offer of grant relating to those aged 60 or over would require providing free entrance to Salt Ayre Sports Centre, Hornby, Carnforth and Heysham swimming pools to swim during public opening times when they would normally have been admitted at a charge. It is also assumed that there would be an increase in the number of swimming lessons provided to those aged 60 and over.
- 2.4 The DCMS will require monitoring information to be provided as part of the grant with specific regard to (but not limited to) National Indicator targets NI8, NI55, NI56, NI110, and NI137. Therefore, the scheme will require a system to be set up that enables specific monitoring of customers who take part, with such information being fed back to the DCMS. It is envisaged that this information would also be included within Cultural Services performance management reporting as part of the PRT process.
- 2.5 In addition, Government is providing a total of £60,000,000 capital for capital projects designed to modernise pool provision, which are integrated with providing free swimming. £10 million would be made available in financial year 2008/09 to reward those authorities which sign up to both schemes. Such authorities would receive a pro rata population based share of the £10 million capital in financial year 2008/09 and may submit bids for the remaining funding for financial year 2009/10. Such bids cannot be used as partnership funding bids for financial year 2009/10 onwards.
- 2.6 This resource fund is not open to County Councils,. However, school pools if contributing to the overall free swimming scheme, will be considered for capital bids.

3.0 Details of Consultation

- 3.1 Consultation has not taken place within the community owing to the short timescale between receiving the circular and need to confirm participation in the schemes by 15th September 2008.
- 3.2 However, providing free swimming for those aged 60 or over would fit with the Service's approach to providing opportunities for safe exercise to the wider cross section of the community and indications from partner organisations such as PCT support this. There is also a link with the work undertaken by the Sport and Physical

Activity Partnership (PCT, Lancashire Sport, Education Sector) and objectives within the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy and Local Strategic Partnership.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

4.1

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages	Risks
1. Accept grant award for providing free swimming to those aged 60 and above.	<p>Grant funding will cover loss of income based on estimates of current usage and likely increased participation.</p> <p>Secondary spend opportunities gained from 'new market'.</p> <p>Profile of swimming in the district considerably raised providing opportunity for City Council to generate positive image for city, coast and countryside.</p> <p>Specific data to be collected for 60 plus age group (currently not available) Opportunities to enter in to partnership arrangements such as PCT and local GP surgeries. Council viewed as ambitious by DCMS</p>	Potential bather discomfort if takeup is excessive..	Increase in numbers participating from the 60 plus age group unknown prior to scheme commencement (approx 30% of population aged 60 and over) - therefore degree of unknown takeup applies.
2. Turn down the offer of £44,375 for 2009/10 and 2010/11 for participation in the over 60 free swimming scheme.	Current income streams from this group remain unaffected	Lost opportunities to specifically target this age group and address the health agenda by providing greater opportunities for people to exercise safely. Possible detrimental effect to relationship with organisations such as the Primary Care Trust.	Poor publicity and damage to positive image the City Council conveys.
3. Express an interest in offering free swimming to those aged 16 and under	<p>Viewed as an ambitious Authority by DCMS</p> <p>Expression of interest at this stage does not represent any firm commitment.</p>	Not fully clear as level of grant not yet allocated. Scheme would be sure to raise attendance levels amongst this age group (possibly others accompanying) with	Further information to be provided to Cabinet once grant award is known.

	Enables Officers time to work up implications once informed of grant allocation.	increased costs to staffing, energy and chemicals	
4. Turn down opportunity to express interest in participation of scheme to provide free swimming to those aged 16 and under.	Current income streams from this sector remain.	Not fully clear as level of grant not yet allocated. Opportunity to promote swimming amongst this age group lost with associated secondary spend benefits. Council viewed as not being ambitious by DCMS if expression not submitted.	Poor publicity and damage to positive image the City Council conveys.

5.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)

- 5.1 Preferred options are 1 and 3; accept grant of £44,375 for free swimming for those aged 60 and above. Also, to submit an expression of interest for participating in the free swimming scheme for those aged 16 and under. This will also provide the additional advantage of exploring receipt of capital funding from DCMS.
- 5.2 Further information would need to be collated in relation to free swimming for those aged 16 and under subject to the award of grant to the City Council; due to be announced by 30th September 2008. The Council would then need to confirm by 15th October whether it would be participating or otherwise.

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 The DCMS is keen to enable Authorities to contribute towards the health agenda and these schemes are clearly aimed at encouraging increased participation in swimming. Information gathered to date by officers suggests that the free swimming scheme for those aged 60 and over would likely be cost neutral owing to the grant award.
- 6.2 Agreement to submit an expression of interest only at this stage for free swimming to those aged 16 and under would enable the Authority to receive the offer of an additional grant from the DCMS without commitment. Officers would then be charged with determining a cost benefit analysis.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

Contributes towards :
Ensuring cost effective services that give good value for money
Provide customer focussed accessible service

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The offer of free swimming to those aged 60 or above will provide greater opportunities for health benefits for this age group by enabling safe exercise to be undertaken at swimming pool facilities. The scheme is available throughout the district including pools at Salt Ayre, Hornby, Carnforth and Heysham.

Monitoring of throughput will be undertaken by Cultural Services thus providing valuable data which could be shared appropriately with organisations such as the PCT.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Initial analysis has been undertaken by Cultural Services of the costs associated with the free swimming scheme for those aged 60 and above and has demonstrated that the scheme should be cost neutral. This has been reviewed by Financial Services and the assumptions made seem reasonable. Likely loss of income from this current category has been taken into account with allowances made for some increases to staffing costs, energy (marginal), pool water disinfection, lifeguarding, swimming lessons, marketing and general administration. An illustration of likely annual costs is set out below:

Income

<u>DCMS Grant</u>	44,400
Total Income	£44,400

Costs

Loss of Income	21,000
Increase in Senior Citizen Swimming Lessons	10,000
Increase in Life Guarding	6,000
Energy & Chemical	3,000
Administration	2,000
Marketing	<u>2,000</u>
Total Expenditure	£44,000
<u>Surplus/Deficit (-/+)</u>	-400

If Recommendation 1 is approved then the General Fund Revenue Budget in 2009/10 and 2010/11 will need to be updated as part of the 2009/10 Budget Process.

Members are reminded that if Recommendation 3 is approved that this is an in-principle only decision and that a report will be brought back to the 7th October meeting with more detail of the impact on the Council's resources.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Legal have been consulted and have no further comments to add

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

DCMS Circular dated 29th July 2008
Officer working papers

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