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## Report of the Director of City Development

### Executive Board

Date: 14 January 2009

Subject: Free Swimming Capital Modernisation Programme

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#### Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted  
(referred to in report)

#### Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In

(Details contained in the report)

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Council accepted in full the Government offer of funding to provide free swimming for 60+ and 16 & under. The estimated revenue shortfall has now fallen to £30k a year due to an increase in the grant per council.
- Accepting the offer in full qualified the Council to receive a one-off capital grant of £227,368, to be applied to pool modernisation.
- The Council is also eligible to apply for further capital funding from 'Pot 4', which holds a national total of £25 million per year for 2009/10 and 2010/11.
- Officers have liaised with Sport England about a range of proposals which may form final bids for monies from Pot 4. These covered changing room improvements at Kirkstall & Scott Hall, discreet changing cubicles, energy efficiency measures, pool filtration improvements and three new sound & light systems for pool halls.
- Sport England, for the Department for Culture, Media & Sport, has indicated 'encouragement' for the Scott Hall changing room refurbishment and the three sound & light systems to encourage more junior swimming.
- It is recommended that the Board agree that we turn these two projects into firm applications for the deadline of 31 January 2009.

## Purpose of the Report

- .1 To enable firm applications to be made to the Government's Free Swimming Capital Modernisation Programme by the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2009 deadline.

## Background

- .1 Members will recall that a report was brought to the Executive Board in October outlining the details of the Government's free swimming offer. The Executive Board recommended that the free swimming offer should be accepted. Furthermore Executive Board asked that a further report be brought back to the Board relating to decisions on capital bids associated with the free swim programme. and the Council now has to decide which firm applications it is going to make against the 'Pot 4' fund, which has £25m to distribute nationally for 2009/10.
- .2 Table 1: Summary of DCMS Offer

Pot / Year	Purpose	National	Leeds Share
1 (2009/10 & 2010/11)	Free swimming for 60 & over at any time they could swim on the local pool programme	£15m p.a.	£200,174 (fixed)
2 (2009/10 & 2010/11)	Free swimming for 16 & under at any time they could swim on the local pool programme	£25m p.a.	£419,086 up from £347,272
3 (2008/09)	Pro rata one-off incentive for pool modernisation \ bid costs for all who sign up to free swimming (pots 1 & 2)	£10m	£227,368 up from £170,714
4 (2009/10 & 2010/11)	Free Swimming capital modernisation programme	£25m p.a.	Challenge fund but expected share £1m over the two years

- .3 Subsequent to the October report the estimated revenue gap of implementing free swimming for Under 16s and over 60`s has now fallen to approximately £30k a year, as the grant increased due to some authorities declining the offer.
- .4 The Government's timescales and written details/guidance for submission of bids for Pot 4, have been very tight with the Council required to submit firm bids for Pot 4 by the 31 January 2009. Sport England invited expressions of interest by 31st October 2008. Accordingly, officers, in consultation with the Executive Member for Leisure, put forward a range of options in accordance with the guidance given by Sport England: Yorkshire and in recognition of the investment needs of the leisure centre portfolio. The schemes were:
- changing room refurbishment at Kirkstall,
  - changing room refurbishment at Scott Hall,
  - discreet changing cubicles,
  - new pool covers to improve energy efficiency,
  - pool filtration measures to improve water quality and
  - installing sound & light systems to increase the appeal to younger swimmers at John Smeaton, Scott Hall plus one other site with will be determined subject to feasibility based on programming and technicalities at either Pudsey or Aireborough Leisure Centres

- .5 The mix of schemes was designed to provide a broad mix of options to fit the bidding criteria with some emphasis on innovation. Bids to Pot 4 were competitive and as such there remains no guarantees of support and, therefore, which schemes might be favoured. Sport England, administering the programme for the Department for Culture, Media & Sport have considered the initial proposals put forward and have indicated informal 'encouragement' for Leeds to proceed to submit full bids by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2009 in respect of;
- (a) 3 x Sound & Light systems in pools and
  - (b) Scott Hall changing room refurbishment.

With respect to Scott Hall Leisure Centre, the changing rooms have not been fully refurbished since the facility opened in the early 1980's. Combined with the high footfall at the facility, the changing rooms are considered to be a priority for refurbishment. This proposal is also in line with the Draft Vision for Leisure Centres considered by Executive Board on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2008, which identified the need for investment in Scott Hall Leisure Centre.

### Options for consideration

- .1 The option for Leeds City Council are:
- (a) To go ahead with final applications for Scott Hall changing room refurbishment and the Sound & Light systems, as encouraged by Sport England, or
  - (b) To drop these bids and focus on 2010/11 for more ambitious projects.
- 3.2 On the basis that there is no guaranteed funding from Pot 4 and in view of the Council being encouraged to submit bids to this round, it is proposed that the Council progresses with the submissions for Scott Hall Leisure Centre and new sound and lighting systems.

### Risk Management, Legal and Resource Implications

- .1 The estimated funding of the two 'encouraged' 2009/10 projects is set out below:

Table 2: Estimated Cost and Funding

	Estimated Cost	Government Grant	Leeds funding
Scott Hall changing room refurbishment, into 'village' changing.	£400k	£340k	£60k Asset Management Capital in the Capital Programme Scheme No 14268
New Sound & Light Systems in John Smeaton and two other pool halls.	£90k	£70k	£20k Commercial Sponsorship in the revenue budget for 2009/10
<b>Total</b>	<b>£490k</b>	<b>£410k</b>	<b>£80k</b>

- .2 There is an additional risk to the net income of Scott Hall in summer 2009 when the work would be planned (to minimise cancellation of the important swim lessons programme). To reduce any losses at times that will have the least impact on revenue costs, work will be scheduled during the summer holidays. This will avoid the works impacting on swimming lessons and school curriculum. Arrangements will also be made to encourage as many staff as possible to take annual leave during a short complete closure. Customers would be directed to pool and dry-side programmes in neighbouring centres. The service will review the possibility of maintaining some elements of the dry side service, although there would be 2 key issues to consider
- (a) with there being no separate dry side changing this would limit the service offer and may not prove practical to implement.
  - (b) There maybe a need to close the building in full to complete the buildings works given the location of the changing rooms to the reception area.
  - (c) The risk to income is around £30k.

### **Implications for Council Policy and Governance**

- .1 This decision does not affect statutory services. It fits with Council policy to extend the benefits of a vibrant city and in particular our strategic outcomes and improvement priorities that relate to participation in sporting activities.

### **Conclusions**

- .1 The Council's Leisure Centre portfolio needs significant investment. To address this issue the Council needs to optimise all opportunities for third party funding to meet the investment needs of the Sport and Active Recreation Service. The monies available through the free swimming initiative will help to improve the quality of the facilities, which in turn will help to improve the operational sustainability and usage of the facilities in future years

### **Recommendation**

- .1 Members are recommended to agree that officers submit final bids in respect of Scott Hall and Sound & Light systems as set out in 4.1 above, for the 2009/10 round of the Free Swimming Capital Modernisation programme, by 31 January 2009.

### **Background Papers**

Department for Culture, Media and Sport and Sport England websites – “Free Swimming”