
REPORT TO:	Housing & Community Services	AGENDA ITEM: 9
DATE OF MEETING:	2nd September 2008	CATEGORY: DELEGATED/
REPORT FROM:	Director of Community Services	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	S Batchelor Ext.5820	DOC:
SUBJECT: WARD(S) AFFECTED:	Free Swimming Offer All	REF: TERMS OF REFERENCE:HCS07

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 To approve the Councils involvement in the offer of free swimming for Over 60 year olds and the expression of interest in the offer of free swimming for under 16 year olds.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To explain the details of the Governments offer of free swimming for over 60 year olds and under 16 year olds and approve the Councils involvement in the former and further investigation into the latter.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 The Department for Culture, Sport and Media (DCMS) has released details on the Governments proposed 'Free Swimming Scheme' which aims to increase participation in physical activity by older people and youngsters. The Scheme is fully summarised as follows:
- 3.2 The scheme is split into a number of 'pots'
- 3.3 Pot 1 – To offer free swimming for 60 and over towards which the Council will be allocated an annual grant for 2009/10 and 2010/11 of £24,900. The Council has to confirm its involvement in the scheme by 15 September 2008 whether they want to take up the offer.
- 3.4 Pot 2 – To support free swimming for under 16 year olds but only available to those Councils that that go for pot 1. Councils will have to submit an expression of interest by 15 September 2008 and will receive details of their funding allocation by 30 September 2008 and then confirm that they wish to proceed by 15 October 2008.

- 3.5 Pot 3 – Modernising pool provision – capital reward fund for 2008/09 for those Councils who sign up to Pot 1 and Pot 2 who will receive pro rata population based share of £10m.
- 3.6 Pot 4 – Modernising pool provision – capital challenge fund. For modernising pool provision and support more ambitious plans for swimming and can only to be used to modernise pool provision in a way that's integrated with the free swimming scheme. Sport England will administer Pot 4 and will be publishing a prospectus for bids for funding which will give more information. It is also only for those Councils who have signed up for Pot 1 and Pot 2. Councils will have to submit costed plans by 15 October 2008.
- 3.7 There will be a requirement of the Councils to measure the impact of the free swimming programme so as to inform future delivery and funding arrangements, with DCMS centrally funding the secondary analysis which will help determine the future of the scheme after 2011.
- 3.8 The Scheme is only funded for two years and no decision will be made on future funding until after the Governments next Comprehensive Spending Review. Consequently it is important that the scheme is only promoted as a two year programme with an expectation that charges may have to be reintroduced after 2011.
- 3.9 As the two public swimming pools in the District are managed by SLM at Green Bank Leisure Centre and the Joint Management Committee at Etwall Leisure Centre then negotiations will need to be undertaken to agree on the extent of free use and how it will fit in with existing membership schemes. However it is anticipated that such discussions will be positive and an exciting offer can be made to people aged over 60 years. In terms of the offer for under 16 year olds this will be given further consideration once the amount of grant aid is known but again a positive result should be feasible that provides an incentive for increased swimming participation by young people.
- 3.10 In terms of capital spending consideration will be given to what improvements can be made to facilities to ensure that all funding can be utilised.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The Governments offer of £24,900 per year for two years for free swimming for people aged over 60 will enable a significant package of free swimming at Green Bank and Etwall Leisure Centres to be offered which will encourage increased participation by older people. The exact scope of the free element will be confirmed following discussions with partners. In terms of under 16 year olds the level of grant will be announced at the end of September and at that point a decision can be made as to the degree of free use that is provided to that group of youngsters.
- 4.2 The confirmation of only two years of funding means that the promotion of the scheme will need to be carefully controlled to ensure that expectations are managed so the 'free' element is only for a two year pilot.

5.0 Corporate Implications

- 5.1 The free swimming scheme provides a great opportunity for improving the health and well being of local people which contributes to the LAA target of increasing the physical activity level of adults and reducing obesity levels of youngsters plus supporting the Corporate priority theme of Safer and Healthier Communities.

6.0 Community Implications

- 6.1 Swimming is an ideal activity for promoting health and fitness within the community and involvement in this initiative will help improve the health of local people, developing a lifestyle which includes physical activity.

7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 The free swimming scheme provides an excellent opportunity to increase swimming participation at no cost to the Council for two years.

8.0 Background Papers

- 8.1 DCMS grant offer letter.