

RECKLAND COUNCIL

AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER OF COMMUNITIES ADRIAN STASIAK **(Author: Cat Lang and Stefan Clifford)**

DISS RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB: MATCH FUNDING APPLICATION

To review match funding application made by Diss Rugby Football Club and protocol for funding organisations outside district boundary.

1. INTRODUCTION

1. This report focuses on the application made by Diss Rugby Football Club (RFC) to the Breckland Council Capital Match Funding Grant Scheme for £20,000 towards Phase 2 of their proposed 5-phase £600,000 facility development (See Appendix A). The application was considered at Cabinet on Nov 30th 2010. The Cabinet decision was taken that the Match Funding application be deferred, subject to:
 - i) a review by the Audit Committee to look at the number of residents from the Breckland area benefiting from these projects;
 - ii) confirmation of financial commitments from other sources; and
 - iii) the protocol being reviewed in terms of cross local authority boundary funding to ensure that Breckland Council is getting value for money.
- 1.2 This report aims to clarify the extent to which the Club have declared that their project impacts on and includes Breckland Residents, and to confirm their position regarding funding from other parties.
- 1.3 This report will also review the current eligibility criteria of Breckland Council grant schemes which enables groups from outside the district to apply for funding for their projects.

2. Background

- 2.1 Diss RFC is a high performing, constitutionally sound, socially inclusive sports club, a focal point of the local community and surrounding area, and the leading RFC club in Norfolk. Whilst it is situated just outside the boundary of the district of Breckland by some 5 miles, it impacts on the district by being a club that young aspiring rugby players want to play for and be coached by, due to the high standards it has set both on and off the field of play, and hence it draws members from within the district of Breckland.
- 2.2 Currently the club runs a junior section that caters for over 200 under 16's, a women's teams, a veteran's team, and 4 senior men's teams. It coaches externally to 20 local schools and it competes in the National League 3 London and South East, making it one of the premier teams in the Eastern Region. It is currently in the midst of Phase 1 of its £600,000 development of its facility and is requesting £20,000 Capital Match Funding towards Phase 2, the total costs of which are £104,661 (See Appendix B).
- 2.3 In 2007, the Breckland Match Funding grant scheme was reviewed in order to provide a better quality of application, clearer objectives which correlate to Breckland's Business Plan and a grant scheme which provides opportunities for all aspects of the community to apply

to. All application forms and guidance notes were changed in accordance with this review and has since been the only method for grant applications. (See Appendix I)

3. Issues

3.1 Previously, Breckland Council has funded projects which are not based within the district but provide a service or activity to the residents within the district. Diss RFC are the first application Breckland has received whereby the residents are expected to travel outside the district to access the service. The guidance notes do not currently specify that a group outside the Breckland area cannot apply for funding for their project, however, it does state that Breckland residents must be beneficiaries

3.2 At this time there is therefore nothing which prohibits Diss RFC or any other organisation outside Breckland applying for Breckland Match Funding under the current eligibility criteria. There is also no protocol in place to ensure that should Breckland Council award a grant, that this should be matched with a comparable grant from within the local authority within which the organisation is based.

3.2 Breckland Beneficiaries

Whilst the majority of Diss RFC Members are based outside the Breckland District, the Club has evidenced that 16.1% of its members are Breckland rate payers (See Appendix C) and it is on this basis that they have submitted their application:

Of these 136 Breckland based club members, 27 are also presidents or officers at the club, who sit on the committee and hold significant positions of influence (See Appendix D)

Diss RFC also benefits the district of Breckland by operating a coaching outreach service to 20 schools within its vicinity, 5 of which lay within the Breckland District (See Appendix E) and the club has stated that it will be looking to build on this in the future.

3.3 Confirmation of Financial Commitments

Diss RFC have secured funding for their total project costs from a variety of organisations. (See Appendix F)

From the £200,000 expected to be raised by Club Member Pledges, £46,000 has been offered from Breckland Based Benefactors (See Appendix G).

The remaining balance of members pledges after completion of phase 1 (forecast for May 2011 and estimated at £30,000) will be used to fund phase 2, along with the secured £20,000 from South Norfolk District Council, secured £20,000 from Mid-Suffolk District Council, and the pending Match Funding Grant from Breckland of £20,000,

That the payment releases indicated in Appendix H do not match up with the total costs of phase 2, is due to Diss RFC paying contractors periodically throughout the duration of the entire project which are out of synch with the running costs of each individual phase.

5. Options

- 5.1
- i) To recommend that cabinet approves the Diss Rugby Football Club Match Funding application
 - ii) To recommend that cabinet does not approve the Diss Rugby Football Club Match Funding application

- iii) To change eligibility criteria change eligibility criteria for all Match Funding applications with effect from April 1st 2011 to ensure that only organisations geographically based in Breckland can apply for funding or organisations based outside Breckland delivers the services within the local authority boundary.
- iv) If the eligibility criteria is not to be changed, to implement a protocol to ensure that the local authority within which the organisation is based matches or exceeds the grant requested from Breckland.

6. Recommendation

Based on the fact that no eligibility criteria currently exists with regard to Match Funding applications being made by organisations from outside of the district, the recommendation is to fund Diss RFC to the amount requested providing Members are satisfied with the number of beneficiaries in Breckland that will benefit from the project.

It is also recommended that the eligibility criteria is changed as of April 1st 2011, to ensure applications can only be received from applicants based or delivering services within the local authority boundary.

7. Reasons for recommendations

- To provide value for money on grants which will benefit Breckland residents
- By having clearer eligibility criteria it will assist with grant application decisions and help determine suitable applicants.
- Diss RFC has provided Breckland Council with high standard of information relating to beneficiaries, with a strong application and support from their local authority and community.

8. Risk and Financial Implications

8.1 Risk

8.1.2 No risk identified.

8.2 Financial

4.2.1 Please see the following Proforma B's for the match funding projects:

8.2.3 Proforma B – Diss RFC

9. Other Implications

- a) Equalities: None
- b) Section 17, Crime & Disorder Act 1998: None
- c) Section 40, Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006: None
- d) Human Resources: None

e) Human Rights: None

f) Other: [e.g. Children's Act 2004] None

7. Alignment to Council Priorities

1. Building Safer and Stronger Communities:

- Promote the sense of community belonging and pride
- Contribute to improving the health of our district

2. Your Council, Your Services

- Help your elected councillor to act as your community leader, champion and advocate
- Involve people in the design and delivery of services that meet their needs
- Strengthen community consultation and involvement
- Improve quality and consistency of services provided

3. Prosperous Communities:

- Develop flourishing rural communities
- Protect and enhance our town centres

8. Ward/Community Affected

8.1.1 All wards affected.

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Key Decision Status (Executive Decisions only): not a key decision

Appendices attached to this report:

A – Phased project plan

B – Cost profile for phase two of the project

C – Membership breakdown

D – President and member list

E – List of schools with outreach work

F – List of secured funding

G – Breckland benefactors

H – Cashflow forecast

I – Match Funding guidance notes