

Item: 4

Community Development Fund Sub-committee: 28 March 2024.

Application Number 0/5/8/92.

Rockworks Community Sports Trust.

Upgrade of Community Sports Facility.

Report by Corporate Director for Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration.

1. Purpose of Report

To consider an application from Rockworks Community Sports Trust for assistance towards the upgrade of Rockworks Community Playing Fields, Holm.

2. Recommendations

The Sub-committee is invited to note:

2.1.

That Rockworks Community Sports Trust has applied for assistance from the Community Development Fund towards the overhaul and upgrade of the Rockworks Community Playing Fields, for use by the Holm community and beyond, at a total estimated eligible cost of £52,170.

2.2.

That Rockworks Community Sports Trust has applied for match funding amounting to £36,085 from the Crown Estate Community Led Local Development Fund, Scottish Sea Farms and Scottish Football Association towards the project.

2.3.

That messages of support have been received from groups and individuals, as detailed in section 5.2 of this report.

It is recommended:

2.4.

That a grant amounting to 30.83% of total eligible costs, up to a maximum sum of £16,085, to be met from the Community Development Fund, be offered to Rockworks Community Sports Trust towards the overhaul and upgrade of the Rockworks sports pitch, subject to:

- Confirmation of the subsidy control position to the satisfaction of the Corporate Director for Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration.
- Confirmation of a full funding package.

2.5.

That powers be delegated to the Corporate Director of Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration, in consultation with the Head of Finance, to authorise advance payment of the grant, referred to at paragraph 2.4 above, on receipt of invoices, if required in order to assist cash flow requirements of Rockworks Community Sports Trust.

2.6.

That powers be delegated to the Corporate Director of Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration, in consultation with the Head of Legal and Governance, to determine whether appropriate security can be put in place and, if so, to conclude an Agreement, on the Council's standard terms and conditions, with Rockworks Community Sports Trust in respect of the funding, detailed at paragraphs 2.4 and 2.5 above.

3. Background

3.1.

Rockworks Community Sports Trust, which was established in 2016, is an unincorporated constituted group whose primary objective is to promote community involvement in the East Mainland of Orkney, promoting healthy lifestyles and fitness of all participating sports, providing a fun and safe environment for all ages and abilities.

3.2.

Rockworks Community Sports Trust currently have 8 committee members. The Rockworks Facility is a dedicated sports facility in Holm, Orkney, a parish previously without a dedicated sports-field. Donated by the late Alfred Flett, the land served as a community project, with overwhelming support and funding, transforming a WW2 site into a sporting facility. Key contributions from Balfour Beatie, Sportscotland, and the National Lottery facilitated the original establishment of the field in 2007.

3.3.

From its inception, the facility gained substantial community backing, drawing hundreds to games and receiving generous donations during events. Social media engagement, particularly on Facebook, reflects widespread and continuing support for the facility. The redevelopment plan aligns with the Trust's commitment to community inclusivity, equality, and diversity.

3.4.

Engaging a diverse range of local organisations and the community for support, the committee conducted a comprehensive community survey. This covered the whole community and was particularly focussed on the importance of input from those who attend sporting events. Letters of support and surveys resulted in over 700 responses.

3.5.

Currently, the Rockworks facility is used by a variety of local groups, including East Mainland Junior/Senior Football clubs, East Mini Rugby, Parish football games and Gala Days.

3.6.

Due to the age and condition of the pitch, it is currently only accessible to groups for around two and half months of the year. This is because the original drains have become damaged and blocked making for bog like conditions for nine months of the calendar year and so the pitch is no longer fit for purpose for most of the year. This is a significant constraint to the community and Rockworks Community Sports Trust wish to increase availability of the surface for uptake from groups throughout the year and become once again the heart of the community.

3.7.

The pitch itself has also deteriorated and no longer has a flat and even playing surface. This is thought to have arisen because at the time it was built there was no sand utilised in its creation, without this essential drainage medium the soil structure has deaerated and compacted over time, with nowhere for water to drain away. This soil structure is a critical factor for pitch condition, particularly with Orkney's wet climate and is thus a significant constraint to usage of the facility for most of the year. Having a viable community sports pitch available to local clubs throughout the year will allow groups and clubs to participate in sports and recreation in their local area without having to travel to facilities in Kirkwall, increasing likelihood of local participation and giving the East Mainland communities a sense of pride and ownership of a dedicated local facility for years to come.

4. Project Proposal

4.1.

Rockworks Community Sports Trust plan to overhaul the Rockworks Community Playing Fields, which has been on the decline for several years and is now unplayable for 9 months of the year due to waterlogging. The surface of the pitch has created health and safety concerns due to the undulations. The upgraded pitch will bring Rockworks Community Sports Trust increased bookings and provide a safe surface for all ages, abilities, and community groups to take advantage of throughout the year, allowing local groups a place to congregate and participate in sports and other outdoor community activities in their own parish.

4.2.

The project costs, which have been determined by way of quotations, and proposed funding arrangements, are outlined below (inclusive of VAT as Rockworks Community Sports Trust is not VAT registered):

| Project Details. | Cost. |
|---|-----------------|
| New Pitch Deep Draining System. | £26,085. |
| New Pitch Connecting Drainage System/Overseeding. | £6,795. |
| Pitch Surface Upgrade. | £19,290. |
| Total. | £52,170. |
| Project Financing. | Amount. |
| Scottish Football Association (19.17%). | £10,000. |
| Scottish Sea Farms (19.17%). | £10,000. |
| Crown Estate Community Led Development (30.83%). | £16,085. |
| Community Development Fund (30.83%). | £16,085. |
| Total. | £52,170. |

4.3.

Crown Estate Community Led Development Fund, Scottish Sea Farms and Scottish Football Association grants are the remaining funders to be confirmed. A decision on Scottish Football Association is expected around mid-March, Crown Estate Community Led Local Development funding confirmation is expected by 28 March and Scottish Sea Farms at the end of April 2024.

4.4.

Rockworks Community Sports Trust has a binding lease agreement in place with Holm Community Association, the owner of the pitch and facilities. The lease commenced on 5 February 2024 for a period of 20 years, thereafter, forming a rolling lease with all the same terms and conditions.

5. Project Appraisal

5.1.

The proposals put forward in the development plan, which accompanies the application, outlines the intention to upgrade the community sports field allowing Rockworks Community Sports Trust to offer more accessible and inclusive facilities to members of the local community.

5.2.

Letters of support in relation to this project have been received from the following groups and individuals:

- Liam McArthur MSP.
- Orkney Island Games 2025.
- East United Football Club.
- East Mainland Young Farmers.
- Councillor Gillian Skuse.
- Holm Community Association.
- UHI Orkney.
- Alfred Flett Limited.
- Orkney Rugby Football Club.
- Orkney Football Club.
- Orkney Football Academy.
- Councillor Raymie Peace.
- Holm Football Club.
- Holm Community Council.
- Various members of the local community.

5.3.

The Community Development Fund and its predecessor, the Community Development Fund for the New Millennium, have supported a wide range of development projects for upgrading facilities, including:

- Birsay Community Association towards creation of play park and community area.
- Stromness and Orkney Golf Club towards upgrading and course improvements.
- Orkney Bowling Club towards upgrading surface.

5.4.

With regard to Rockworks Community Sports Trust's application, the following is an assessment and evaluation against each of the approved assessment and evaluation criteria:

5.4.1. Evidence of need

- Rockworks Community Sports Trust has carried out a community survey, receiving over 700 responses from players, parents, supporters and members of the local community.
- The letters received all support the assessment of the pitch condition as inappropriate and hazardous and the knock-on effects of having a community pitch for only two and a half months per year. The content received demonstrates the demand from community and sports groups for increasing activity based on the offering by Rockworks Community Sports Trust.

5.4.2. Achievability

- Rockworks Community Sports Trust is run by a volunteer committee of 8 people. Each of them brings a variety of knowledge and experience, which has enabled the Trust to manage its facility and general operations for 17 years.
- A project sub-committee has been established and consists of 4 committee members, who have a wide range of skills and experience carry through the project. This includes management of commercial building projects, project management and sports development.

5.4.3. Sustainability

- The project will assist in improving the sustainability of Rockworks Community Sports Trust's facilities for the future, as well as helping to achieve its long-term sustainability through increased community participation.
- To allow the East Mainland to have a fit for purpose facility, Rockworks Community Sports Trust's practice is to keep pitch fees as low as practically possible. Club funds are maintained through regular fundraising events run annually. This helps increase participation throughout the local community and in turn also helps ensure the long-term sustainability of Rockworks Community Sports Trust.

5.4.4. Serving the local public and having lasting benefits

- The project will benefit the wider Orkney community, improving the accessibility of a grass pitch and promoting the physical and social benefits to the wider public.
- The formal training on offer to members will lead to the sharing of technical knowledge between generations and the development of social skills.

5.4.5. Opportunities provided or upgraded

- The Rockworks facility upgrade aligns with the overarching goal to fortify Orkney's individuals and communities against the COVID-19 pandemic's socio-economic impacts which continue to be relevant in terms of backlog of activity and the time it has taken for groups to re-engage and confidently move forward with new project activities. Enhanced facilities, such as the Rockworks, aid the recovery and renewal of individuals and communities. Upgrading the Rockworks facility ensures the Orkney community can access a safe, fit-for-purpose facility in their local area.

5.4.6. Enriching quality of life

- The Rockworks renovation contributes to a flourishing population in Orkney, attracting individuals of all ages who choose to stay, return, or relocate for an improved quality of life. The facility attracts bookings for a range of clubs including:
 - East United FC – Over 120 registered adults and children.
 - East Mini Rugby – 30.
 - Holm Parish Football Club – 30.
 - Holm Community Association / Gala Days – 100+.

- East Mainland Young Farmers – 50.
- Orkney Football Rugby Club – 100.
- Orkney Football Academy – 50.
- Other community groups have also evidenced their intent to utilise an improved pitch, including Orkney Women’s Football and the Orkney Football Club. Many groups have not been able to book due to the drainage issues. The Rockworks facility is a popular choice hosting clubs from out with Orkney as they can travel on Pentland Ferries, making the return boat timelier than playing in Kirkwall or Stromness.

5.4.7. Value for money

- Project costs have been carefully identified by obtaining competitive quotes for all works, ensuring best value for money.
- The successful contractors for the work have demonstrated a good understanding of the project brief and are reputable companies within their specialist fields whom the applicant has confidence in. The contractors have agreed to hold the quoted price for works commencing May 2024.

5.4.8. Partnership funding

- Additional funding has been applied for from Crown Estate Community Led Local Develop, Scottish Sea Farms and Scottish Football Association, which will potentially lever in external funding to Orkney.
- This demonstrates a strong effort to secure as much match funding prior to approaching the Community Development Fund.

6. Corporate Governance

6.1.

This report is presented in order to comply with internal governance and reporting requirements and is not for the exclusive purpose of supporting or relating to improved outcomes for communities as detailed in the Council Plan or the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan.

6.2.

Nevertheless, improved sports facilities will assist the Council in increasing the percentage of adults taking part on some form of sport or exercise, including walking, one of the measures of success outlined in the priority, Strengthening our communities, in the Council Plan.

6.3.

In terms of the Scheme of Administration, the determination of applications for financial assistance from the Community Development Fund towards capital projects is delegated to the Community Development Fund Sub-committee.

7. Financial Implications

7.1.

In November 2022, a further £1,000,000 was allocated to the Community Development Fund, with £100,000 ring-fenced for Community Councils.

7.2.

At present there is sufficient budget within the 2022 Community Development Fund tranche to consider this project.

7.3.

The option of accessing Community Development Fund grant as an advance payment, in order to assist cash flow, may also be required to ensure the project reaches a satisfactory conclusion. It is therefore recommended that powers be delegated to the Corporate Director for Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration, in consultation with the Head of Finance, to authorise advance payment of the grant, if approved, on receipt of invoices if required in order to assist Rockworks Community Sports Trust with its cash flow requirements.

8. Legal Aspects

8.1.

Subject to section 8.3, and confirmation of a legally binding lease agreement between Rockworks Community Sports Trust and Holm Community Association for a duration of at least 15 years, there are no legal constraints to the recommendations in this report being implemented and the relevant powers are contained in section 20 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003.

8.2.

If grant assistance is to be provided by the Council, a legally binding agreement will require to be entered into between the Council and the recipient setting out the terms on which the funding is being provided.

8.3.

Any financial assistance provided by the Council will need to be assessed to determine if the financial assistance proposed meets the definition of a subsidy under section 2 of the Subsidy Control Act 2022 (the 2022 Act). If it is determined that financial assistance is a subsidy, then it will need to be provided in a manner compliant with the provisions of the 2022 Act.

8.4.

In accordance with the Community Development Fund Guidance, if grant assistance is to be provided by the Council and the total project cost exceeds £10,000, then the Community Development Fund Sub-committee will determine whether appropriate security should be taken over any appropriate heritable property improved as a result of the project.

9. Contact Officers

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