



Item: 3

Community Development Fund Sub-committee – 30 April 2024.

Application 0/5/8/88 – Orkney Gymnastics Club – Purchase of Equipment.

Report by Corporate Director for Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration.

1. Overview

- 1.1. Orkney Gymnastics Club (“OGC”) has submitted an application for funding to the Council’s Community Development Fund in respect of the purchase of International Gymnastic Federation/Federation Internationale de Gymnastique (“FIG”) approved gymnastics equipment, including a spring-based gymnastics floor, and five 20-foot storage containers, at a total cost of £157,200.
- 1.2. The gymnastic equipment currently owned by OGC does not meet the FIG standard requirements which means that OGC members cannot practise on equipment and flooring which is used at competition level. The equipment is necessary to enable gymnastic competitions at the Orkney Island Games 2025.
- 1.3. The project legacy will be that OGC will have equipment which will enable the gymnasts of Orkney to train and, therefore, compete at national and international level without investing in expensive, time-consuming trips to gymnastic venues which provide FIG standard equipment outwith Orkney prior to attending future competitions.
- 1.4. Further details relating to the application are outlined in sections 4 and 5 below.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that members of the Sub-committee:
 - i. Agree that a grant of up to 50% of total eligible costs, up to a maximum sum of £78,600, to be met from the Community Development Fund, be offered to Orkney Gymnastics Club towards the purchase of Federation Internationale de Gymnastique approved gymnastics equipment and storage containers, subject to:

- Confirmation of the subsidy control position to the satisfaction of the Corporate Director for Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration.
 - Confirmation of the full funding package being secured.
 - Evidence of appropriate arrangements for the long-term location of the storage units.
- ii. Delegate powers to the Corporate Director for Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration, in consultation with the Head of Finance, to authorise, if required, advance payment of the grant, referred to at paragraph 2.1i above, on receipt of invoices, to assist cash flow requirements of the Orkney Gymnastics Club.
 - iii. Delegate powers to the Corporate Director for Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration, in consultation with the Head of Legal and Governance, to determine whether appropriate security can be put in place and to conclude an Agreement, on the Council's standard terms and conditions, with Orkney Gymnastics Club in respect of the funding detailed at paragraphs 2.1i and 2.1ii above.

3. Background

- 3.1. Orkney Gymnastics Club (OGC) has been operating in its current form since 2020. Since the Club's early days till now gymnastics has grown in popularity in Orkney. In 2004, the Club had 32 members and now has over 300 members in 2024. The current waiting list for membership is 210.
- 3.2. The Club offers a range of gymnastic and fitness programmes covering a wide age range from 18 months old to elderly people in need of exercise and mobility programmes. Members of all ages are encouraged to progress and experience success no matter what level or ability. However, there are many talented gymnasts at various levels competing locally and nationally. An Orkney gymnastics squad competed at the Islands Games 2023.
- 3.3. OGC plan to host the gymnastics squads from other island groups in the Orkney Island Games 2025 and to enter the competition with OGC gymnastic squads.
- 3.4. The gymnastic equipment currently owned by OGC is not up to FIG standard or size which means that the members cannot practise on equipment and flooring which is used at competition level. Therefore, this equipment is required for the Orkney Island Games 2025 for the competition to be at the appropriate internationally accepted standard. The project legacy will be that OGC will have equipment which will enable the gymnasts of Orkney to train and therefore compete at national and

international level without investing in expensive, time-consuming trips to gymnastic venues which provide FIG standard equipment outwith Orkney prior to attending competitions.

- 3.5. OGC requests assistance towards the purchase of International Gymnastic Federation/Federation Internationale de Gymnastique (FIG) approved gymnastics equipment including a spring-based gymnastics floor including delivery and five 20-foot storage containers at a total cost of £157,200.
- 3.6. An application has been submitted to Sportscotland requesting a 50% grant of up to a maximum of £78,600.
- 3.7. The planned equipment purchases include:
- Montreal Spring-based training floor.
 - Montreal Spring-based competition floor.
 - Vaulting equipment.
 - Asymmetric bars and associated matting.
 - Beam and associated matting.
 - Supplementary items including additional safety matting and chalk bowls.
- 3.8. The project costs have been determined by means of acquiring a quote from a respected supplier of gymnastic equipment which can supply FIG accredited gymnastic equipment. The proposed funding arrangements, are outlined below (inclusive of VAT as Orkney Gymnastics Club is not VAT registered):

Eligible Costs.		Funding applications.	
Gymnastic equipment and flooring including delivery.	£136,080.	Sportscotland. 50%.	£78,600.
5 x storage containers	£21,120	Community Development Fund 50%.	£78,600.
TOTAL.	£157,200.	TOTAL.	£157,200.

- 3.9. An award from the Community Development Fund has the opportunity to help lever a considerable amount of funding from Sports Scotland.
- 3.10. There is a degree of urgency regarding the project timing as the equipment has to be ordered and has a long lead time, delivered and tested regarding build up and dismantle prior to the Orkney Island Games.

- 3.11. Orkney Gymnastics Club will maintain the equipment and promote the new equipment once the project is complete and the project funding through its website and social media presence.
- 3.12. OGC is also committed to purchasing additional equipment which is required to support the International Island Games Gymnastics competition to the value of £5,000. These items are additional to those which form part of this application but demonstrate the commitment of the Club to investing in International standard equipment and facilities.

4. Project Appraisal

- 4.1. The project proposal submitted in the application is accompanied by a development statement. This statement confirms the intention that the project is for the use of a wide age range from the community and will benefit Orkney gymnasts of all levels and abilities as well as for people possessing challenging difficulties with the aim to improve confidence, mobility and well-being.
- 4.2. The Community Development Fund and its predecessor, the Community Development Fund for the New Millennium, have supported a wide range of development projects involving sports and recreation and community facilities.
- 4.3. With regard to OGC's application for support towards the purchase of FIG standard equipment and storage containers, the following is an assessment and evaluation against each of the approved assessment and evaluation criteria for the CDF:

4.3.1. Evidence of need

- The existing gymnastics equipment at Orkney Gymnastics Club falls short in facilitating training to an international accredited competition level. This situation requires gymnasts to travel outside Orkney to be able to practice on adequate facilities. This limitation restricts the development of local talent and hinders the club's ability to produce competitive gymnasts. It also adds considerable cost to the club, and to athlete to be able to compete.
- The acquisition of competition-grade equipment is imperative to address this shortfall, as it will provide gymnasts with the necessary tools to train at the highest level without the need to travel from Orkney. This upgrade not only eliminates the inconvenience and expenses associated with external training but also empowers Orkney gymnasts to hone their skills locally, fostering a stronger and more competitive gymnastics community within the region.

4.3.2. Achievability

- OGC is relying on three elements to enable the Club's plans to be achieved:
 - Obtaining funding from Sportscotland, which has given positive feedback in relation to this project. The Club envisages receiving the result of the application in April 2024.
 - Obtaining a right of access to Stromness Academy from the Council to use the gymnasium for the short-term, which would enable the Club to utilise the full-sized sprung floor to meet training requirements. This is currently being negotiated with the Education section.
 - Obtaining funding from the Community Development Fund.
- The Club has a sufficient number of coaches and volunteers to achieve the aims of the Club and make the best use of the planned equipment.

4.3.3. Sustainability

- Upgrading the gymnastics equipment at Orkney Gymnastics Club is crucial for building a sustainable and thriving organisation. The current necessity for gymnasts to travel outside Orkney for proper training highlights the limitations of the existing equipment, hindering the Club's potential for growth and success.
- To ensure sustainability Orkney Gymnastics Club has taken proactive steps, such as employing qualified coaches rather than relying solely on volunteers. This professional coaching staff not only enhances the quality of training but also ensures a consistent and structured approach to athlete development. By investing in professional expertise, the Club demonstrates a commitment to long-term success and the well-rounded growth of its gymnasts.
- Furthermore, the Club is dedicated to maintaining affordability for both the organisation and its participants. Regular reviews of financial structures and fees help strike a balance between accessibility and sustainability ensuring that gymnastics remains accessible to a broad range of community members. This approach not only supports the inclusivity of the Club but also contributes to its long-term financial health.
- The equipment upgrade is a necessary step in building a sustainable gymnastics club in Orkney and, subject to any unforeseen changes to external standards or equipment failure, should sustain competition level activity for the next 15 years or more. Through strategic decisions like employing professional coaches and continuously assessing affordability, the club is positioning itself for long-term success, ensuring that gymnastics remains a viable and enriching activity for the local community.

4.3.4. Serving the local public and having lasting benefits

- Investing in competition-grade gymnastics equipment for the Orkney Gymnastics Club, would bring about numerous lasting benefits for the Orkney athletes and the local public. First and foremost, high-quality equipment ensures a safe and conducive environment for gymnasts of all ages and skill levels. This fosters a sense of trust among parents and the community, encouraging greater participation in the sport.
- Competition-grade equipment also provides athletes with the tools to hone their skills and reach their full potential. This not only enhances the overall quality of training but also allows the Club to produce competitive gymnasts who can represent Orkney at regional, national, and even international levels. Such achievements contribute to the community's pride and serve as a source of inspiration for aspiring gymnasts.
- Furthermore, by offering top-notch facilities, Orkney Gymnastics Club becomes a hub for promoting physical fitness, mental well-being, and social interaction. This, in turn, helps address community health concerns and strengthens the social fabric by providing a positive outlet for individuals of all ages. The lasting impact of these benefits extends beyond the immediate present, fostering a culture of athleticism, teamwork, and community engagement for generations to come.

4.3.5. Opportunities provided or upgraded

- Upgrading the gymnastics equipment at Orkney Gymnastics Club would open up additional opportunities for local gymnasts. Firstly, improved equipment ensures a safer and more conducive training environment, reducing the risk of injuries and allowing gymnasts to focus on skill development with confidence.
- The upgraded equipment also provides a platform for enhanced training experiences, allowing gymnasts to explore and refine a broader range of techniques and manoeuvres. This expanded repertoire not only improves individual performance but also positions Orkney gymnasts to compete at higher levels, potentially attracting scholarships, sponsorships, or invitations to prestigious events.
- Access to international accredited standards of equipment encourages talent retention and attracts new participants, fostering a more vibrant gymnastics community in Orkney. With the ability to host higher-level competitions and events, the club becomes a regional hub, offering exposure and recognition for local gymnasts. This exposure can lead to opportunities for scholarships, national team selection, and even professional careers in gymnastics.

4.3.6. Enriching quality of life

- Upgrading gymnastics facilities in Orkney can significantly enrich the quality of life for residents in several ways:
 - **Physical Well-being:** Improved facilities encourage residents to engage in physical activity, promoting overall health and fitness. Regular exercise through gymnastics contributes to better cardiovascular health, muscle strength, flexibility, and coordination, fostering a healthier community.
 - **Mental Health Benefits:** Physical activity is closely linked to mental well-being. Participation in gymnastics can reduce stress, anxiety, and depression, providing an outlet for individuals to channel their energy positively. The sense of accomplishment from mastering new skills also contributes to improved self-esteem.
 - **Community Engagement:** Upgraded facilities can serve as a gathering place for the community, fostering social interactions and a sense of belonging. Community events, competitions, and shared activities at the gymnastics club create opportunities for residents to connect, support one another, and build lasting friendships.
 - **Youth Development:** For young residents, access to improved gymnastics facilities provides a structured and positive outlet for energy. Engaging in gymnastics fosters discipline, teamwork, and goal setting all of which contributes to the personal development of young individuals and preparing them for challenges in various aspects of life.
 - **Cultural and Recreational Opportunities:** A well-equipped gymnastics facility can host competitions, showcase as well as other events, adding cultural and recreational opportunities to the community. This not only entertains residents but also instils a sense of pride in local achievements.
 - **Talent Development and Recognition:** Upgraded facilities create an environment conducive to talent development. Local gymnasts can reach higher levels of skill and performance, potentially gaining recognition at regional, national, or even international levels. This recognition brings pride to the community and serves as an inspiration for aspiring athletes.
 - **Multi-generational Participation:** Gymnastics is a sport that can be enjoyed by individuals of all ages. Improved facilities cater to the diverse needs of the community, providing programs and classes for children, adults, and seniors, promoting active lifestyles across generations adding cultural and recreational dimensions to the local lifestyle.

4.3.7. Value for money

- Choosing a supplier for Orkney Gymnastics Club's equipment which has a positive reputation ensures that the investment yields exceptional value for money. The company selected by OGC, Gymnova, has earned international recognition which signifies a commitment to quality and safety standards, aligning with the club's goal to provide top grade facilities for its gymnasts. The inclusion of a 5-year guarantee further solidifies the value proposition, offering long-term reliability and peace of mind for the club and its future.
- To ensure the correct equipment specifications, Orkney Gymnastics Club has consulted with the Scottish Gymnastics, the national governing body of gymnastics in Scotland. This collaborative effort guarantees that the equipment selected meets industry standards and aligns with the specific needs and aspirations of the gymnastics club. This strategic consultation enhances the overall value of the investment by ensuring that the equipment is tailored to the unique requirements of Orkney Gymnastics Club.
- The Club's approach to requesting the correct level and quantity of equipment demonstrates a commitment to fiscal responsibility. By carefully assessing both short and long-term needs, the Club avoids excessive spending while still ensuring that gymnasts have access to the essential tools for training and competition. This prudent planning not only maximizes the value of the investment but also reflects the club's dedication to financial sustainability.
- In summary, opting for Gymnova as the equipment supplier ensures value for money through international recognition, a 5-year guarantee, consultation with Sportscotland for accurate specifications, and a judicious approach to acquiring equipment that meets both short and long-term needs without unnecessary excess.

4.3.8. Partnership funding

- OGC has applied to Sportscotland for 50% of the equipment costs. Feedback from Sportscotland has been very positive and they have given indications that confirmation of funding should be communicated to the Club by the end of April 2024.

4.3.9. How Orkney Gymnastics can benefit the wider community

- Upgrading the equipment at Orkney Gymnastics Club extends benefits beyond the gymnastics community, positively impacting the wider community in various ways.
 - **Diverse Classes for Improved Mobility:** The upgraded equipment allows the Club to introduce classes aimed at improving mobility, particularly beneficial for the elderly. Gymnastics-based exercises can enhance flexibility, balance, and overall physical well-being, contributing to healthier and more active aging within the community.

- **Inclusive Classes for Additional Support Needs (ASN) & Sensory Classes:**
The new equipment facilitates the introduction of classes tailored to individuals with Additional Support Needs (ASN) and sensory sensitivities. This inclusivity promotes diversity and ensures that gymnastics is accessible to a broader range of community members, fostering a sense of belonging and empowerment.
- **Adult Fitness Classes:** The upgraded facilities enable the introduction of adult fitness classes, providing an opportunity for community members of all ages to engage in physical activity. This not only contributes to individual health but also creates a supportive social environment for adults pursuing fitness goals.
- **Development Links with Active Schools and Orkney College:** The enhanced equipment establishes strong development links with local educational institutions. Collaborations with Active Schools and Orkney College can lead to outreach programs, educational initiatives, and workshops, further integrating gymnastics into the broader community and promoting lifelong fitness.
- **General Feel-Good Factor:** Access to high-quality equipment and professional coaching generates a positive atmosphere within the community. The general feel-good factor arises from the pride of having a well-equipped gymnastics facility, fostering community spirit, and providing a source of inspiration for individuals of all ages.
- In summary, upgrading the equipment at Orkney Gymnastics Club creates a ripple effect of positive impacts on the wider community. The introduction of diverse classes, inclusivity measures, adult fitness programs, and collaboration with educational institutions not only promotes physical well-being but also contributes to a thriving and connected community, fostering a general sense of pride and well-being among residents.

5. Letters of Support

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

- Dr L Johnston, Skerryvore Practice, Kirkwall.
- Kerri Budge, Parent of local athlete.
- Susan Thornton, Parent of local athlete.

For Further Information please contact:

Morag Robertson, Economic Development Officer, extension 2852, Email morag.robertson@orkney.gov.uk.

Implications of Report

1. Financial:

- In December 2022, a further £1,000,000 was allocated to the Community Development Fund, with £100,000 ring-fenced for Community Councils.
- At present there is sufficient budget within the 2022 Community Development Fund tranche to consider this project.
- 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.

2. Legal:

- Subject to the content of the third bullet point below 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.
- 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.
- 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 the financial assistance is a subsidy, then it will need to be provided in a manner compliant with the provisions of the 2022 Act.
- 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.

3. **Corporate Governance:** Determination of applications for funding from the Community Development Fund is delegated to the Community Development Fund Sub-committee.

4. **Human Resources:** N/A.

5. **Equalities:** There are no equality issues arising directly from this report.

6. **Island Communities Impact:** N/A

7. **Links to Council Plan:** The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Council Plan strategic priorities:

- Growing our economy.
- Strengthening our Communities.
- Developing our Infrastructure.
- Transforming our Council.

8. **Links to Local Outcomes Improvement Plan:** The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Local Outcomes Improvement Plan priorities:
 - Cost of Living.
 - Sustainable Development.
 - Local Equality.
9. **Environmental and Climate Risk:** N/A
10. **Risk:** N/A
11. **Procurement:** N/A
12. **Health and Safety:** N/A
13. **Property and Assets:** The project includes purchase of storage containers which will be owned by OGC. The OGC is engaging with the Council's Education and Leisure Service with regard to location for these storage containers.
14. **Information Technology:** N/A
15. **Cost of Living:** N/A

List of Background Papers

- Application from Orkney Gymnastics Club for Community Development Fund assistance dated 16/02/24.
- Community Development Fund Guidance (Ver July2023).