



Report from the Newcastle-under-Lyme Sports Council Review Working Group on the future role of the Sports Council

Purpose of the report

To set out proposals to change the governance arrangements and role of the Newcastle-under-Lyme Sports Council and seek the Borough Council's approval for these changes.

Background

A report was submitted setting out proposals to change the governance arrangements for the Newcastle-under-Lyme Sports Council and to seek Cabinet's approval for these changes. The Cabinet first identified the need to review the governance arrangements of the Sports Council at its meeting on 22 May 2013. At its meeting on 2 April 2014, it affirmed this position and made specific recommendations as follows:

- The Cabinet requests that the Sports Council undertake a review of its governance arrangements and makes recommendations on alternative approaches which could reduce the cost of administering the allocation of grants.
- The Cabinet requests that this review also considers the mechanism by which those elected Members nominated to serve on the Sports Council provide stewardship of monies allocated by the Borough Council in accordance with the Council's Constitutional provisions.
- The Cabinet requests that the Sports Council come forward with proposals within the next three months.

Although it is understood that the Sports Council has started work to consider these matters it is noted that the timescale set by Cabinet has not been achieved. To this end and to expedite this review, officers of the Council have considered the matter and developed some options which the Cabinet is asked to consider.

Resolved:

- a) That the Cabinet endorse the preferred option set out in the report to request the Council's Grant Assessment Panel to be responsible for disbursing the Council's sports grants
- b) That the Cabinet requests the Constitutional Review Group to consider the proposal to add co-opted non-voting members drawn from community representatives who have an expertise in matters of sport and sports development to the Grants Assessment Panel for the purpose of considering sports grants (option D)

- c) That the existing support arrangements for the Sports Council – including provision of an honorary secretary and treasurer, administrative/democratic support and the provision of advice by Borough Council officers is discontinued. Cabinet is asked to note, however, the work currently being undertaken by the Sports Council itself in reviewing its work and governance (as outlined in this report)
- d) That the Cabinet approves these recommendations with a view to implementing the new arrangements from 1 November 2014 onwards
- e) That the above recommendations be subject to agreement from the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture and Localism following consideration of the recommendations from the on-going review currently being undertaken by the Sports Council.

Progress To Date

Following the resolution by the Cabinet at the meeting on 2 April 2014 a Working Group was formed by the Sports Council to undertake the review.

Working Group Members were as follows:

- Mark Thornewill – Director of Sport Across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent – Chair
- Councillor Elizabeth Shenton and Councillor June Walklate
- Sports Council Members - Malcolm Duncan and John Skelding.

The Terms of Reference for the group were agreed as follows:

1. To identify and implement alternative Governance arrangements for the Sports Advisory Council.
2. To identify any amendments required to the Constitution.
3. To identify from where the Committee Members would be drawn.
4. To consider Affiliation fees.
5. To identify venues for future meetings.
6. To identify methods of administering and monitoring the business of the Sports Council.
7. To identify the future financial management of the Sports Council and the possibility of extra sponsorship.
8. To identify those eligible for grant funding.
9. To identify the structure of the Sports Person's Evening.

The Working Group has met three times and members of the Working Group also attended a meeting with Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council Chief Executive John Sellgren, Portfolio Holder Councillor Trevor Hambleton and Mark Bailey.

At its meeting on 17 October 2014 the Working Group was joined by Robert Foster, Head of Leisure and Culture Services at Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council to ensure that the review of the Sports Advisory Council and its future role linked with the aims and objectives of the Borough Council's Leisure and Cultural Services.

Newcastle-under-Lyme Sports Council Review Working Group's Conclusions and Proposals for the Future Role of the Sports Advisory Council

The working Group has come to the following conclusions and asks Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council to consider and endorse the following:

1. That there is a need and role for a local Sports Advisory Council.
2. That the aims and objectives of the Sports Advisory Council be:
 - i. To encourage participation in sport from all sections of the community
 - ii. To act as a champion for sport in the Borough
 - iii. To work in partnership with the Borough Council in assessing the sporting needs of the borough and to advise and help with catering for those needs
 - iv. To act as a consultee to the Local Authority by advising on the collective opinion of local sports interests for the future planning of sports facilities.
 - v. To encourage and support the development of sporting excellence
 - vi. To provide advice to the Council's Grants Panel on the allocation of sports grants funds including the development of a strategic framework to guide grant funding.
 - vii. To recognise the sporting achievements of local individuals and clubs at an annual awards ceremony
 - viii. To receive and consider reports and recommendations from any organisations on matters concerning sport and to take such appropriate action as the Sports Advisory Council might deem necessary
3. That application for membership of the Sports Advisory Council should be open to any sporting club, school or organisation actively operating to cater for the sporting needs of the district, subject to that organisation agreeing to abide by any regulations which may be made by the Sports Advisory Council as to membership and subject also to the Sports Advisory Council retaining the right to reject any application for affiliation if, in the opinion of the Sports Advisory Council, there are reasonable grounds for so doing.
4. The Officers of the new Sports Advisory Council will comprise of Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. These posts will be appointed at the AGM.
5. The Sports Advisory Council will appoint an Executive Committee which shall consist of the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and not more than 6 other members of the Sports Advisory Council, including 1 nominated member each from Keele and Staffordshire Universities, 1 nominated member from Newcastle-under-Lyme College and 1 nominated member from the schools sector.
6. The Executive Committee shall have power to act on behalf of the Sports Advisory Council subject to such restrictions as the Sports Advisory Council may from time to time impose. The Executive Committee will set the annual affiliation fee and advise the Borough Council's Grants Panel on the award of sports grants.

A copy of the Sports Advisory Council's proposed Constitution is attached.

Sports Grants

The Working Group also specifically considered the Sports Advisory Council's future role regarding the Borough Council's Sports Grants Fund.

The Sports Advisory Council will be happy to advise the Borough Council's Grants Panel on the allocation of the sports grant element of the Council's Grant Aid Funding. This function will be delegated to the Sports Advisory Council's Executive Committee.

The final detail will need to be agreed but the Sports Advisory Council would expect that the initial request for a grant application form and receipt of completed forms would be carried out by the Borough Council before they were forwarded to the Sports Advisory Council's Secretary for inclusion on the next available meeting agenda.

The Executive Committee of the Sports Advisory Council will set their meeting dates to ensure that they were held prior to the Borough Council's Grants Panel meetings to give sufficient time for feedback to the Panel. This will necessitate the establishment of application deadline dates for the grant applicants. The Sports Advisory Council's preference is for the Executive Committee to meet 3 times per year to consider grant applications.

The Sports Advisory Council will be happy to work with the Borough Council to develop a strategic framework to guide grant funding.

In view of the amount of funding available, and that few external funding sources exist for individuals as they tend to cater for clubs/organisations, the Sports Advisory Council's preference is for local funding to be used to support individual participants, coaches and officials with their development.

Timescale for the Formation of the new Sports Advisory Council

The Working Group considers it realistic for the new Sports Advisory Council to be operational by April 2015.

Subject to agreement in establishing the Sports Advisory Council by the Borough Council it is proposed to hold an event to launch the Sports Advisory Council and seek nominations for the Officers' posts and Executive Committee members in March 2015.