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**REPORT TO: EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S AND LEISURE SERVICES  
COMMITTEE ON 24 NOVEMBER 2021**

**SUBJECT: MORAY'S SPORT AND LEISURE SERVICE UPDATE**

**BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES AND  
ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT)**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of the progress made in relation to the implementation of the Sport and Leisure Service Business Plan and agree to continue the Council support towards the Active Schools and Community Sports Hub programmes.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (D) (13) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to exercise the Council's statutory functions to provide facilities and support activities related to the development of recreation, sport, culture and social activities.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

**2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:-**

- (i) **scrutinises and notes the progress made in regards to the implementation of the Sport and Leisure Service Business Plan;**
- (ii) **approves the extension of the Active Schools and Community Sports Hub programmes from existing budget for a further one year period from 1 April 2022 in partnership with sportscotland at a cost of £177,000; and**
- (iii) **note that closer working across the sector in Moray is being successfully developed through the Sport and Leisure Strategic Group, and that any proposals for more integrated working, including sharing of resources and staff, developed by this group will be reported back to Committee in due course.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 At the meeting of Education, Communities and Organisational Development Committee on 18 November 2020, the Committee approved the new

Business/Delivery Plan for the Sport and Leisure Service (para 22 of the minute refers).

### **Sport and Leisure Business Plan**

- 3.2 Despite 2020/21 being a challenging period for the Sport and Leisure sector due to the Covid pandemic, several key developments in Moray have been progressed in regards to transforming the Service. During the past year a Change Management Plan has been approved and implemented resulting in a Sport and Culture section being established since September comprising Sport and Leisure, Active Schools and Community Sports Hubs, Libraries, Heritage and Music Instruction.
- 3.3 Since June 2021, a Sport and Leisure Strategic Group has been established which has resulted in closer working across the sector. The Group is driving forward the implementation of the Business Plan, which has resulted in developing shared service delivery opportunities and an improvement to the commercial approach of the service and being responsive to customer needs. The Strategic Group comprises of representatives from private, public and voluntary sector organisations including NHS, Moray Leisure Centre, Moray Sports Centre and Elgin Sports and Community Trust. A summary of the progress made over the first year of the Delivery Plan is contained in **Appendix 1**.
- 3.4 Our recovery from the Covid pandemic is also being realised in connection to our Fit Life Membership levels. From discussions with colleagues across Scotland in late September the majority of organisations were at 50-60% of their pre-Covid membership levels, however at Moray Council as at late Sept we were at 96% of pre-Covid levels. A summary of these memberships is contained in **Appendix 2**. We are now operating a more flexible approach to booking sessions at our facilities where the public have the opportunity to drop in, book in person, by telephone or online. Our highly popular sessions require pre-booking but this has always been the case (even pre-Covid).

### **Active Schools and Community Sports Hub programmes**

- 3.5 Despite 2020/21 being a challenging academic year due to the Covid-19 pandemic the Active Schools and Community Sports Hub programmes have continued to deliver an excellent service to our local community – both in terms of supporting young people to be active and also supporting our volunteers and local clubs/organisations to develop. A summary of their achievements in 2020/21 is contained in **Appendix 3**.
- 3.6 The sportscotland Board have agreed to in principle investment to support the employment of the Principal Active School Managers, Co-ordinators and Community Sports Hub Officers across Scotland for the period 2019-2023, which equates to a four year partnership with Local Authorities. Although a partnership agreement for a 4 year period has been agreed the financial agreement between sportscotland and Moray Council has only been established on an annual basis due to the Council's financial position.
- 3.7 This agreement in principle is subject to the Council sustaining their financial contribution towards these programmes, which equates to approximately 32% of the overall investment. Any reduction in the Council's contribution would result in a reduction of sportscotland contribution, which would result in a

reduction in staffing within the Active Schools and Community Sports Hub team.

### **Covid Update**

- 3.8 Covid restrictions continue to impact on the operations of our sport and leisure facilities and programmes. This is expected to be the case for some time yet however we continue to review these on a regular basis. A background paper is available via the Members' CMIS Portal on the latest covid update.

## **4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

### **(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))**

In relation to the LOIP, this report supports three of the four main priority areas which are building a better future for our children and young people in Moray, empowering and connecting communities and improving the wellbeing of our population.

In relation to the Corporate Plan, this report contributes to three of the four main priority areas which are providing opportunities for people to be the best they can be throughout their lives with a strong and sustained focus on those individuals and groups in our society who experience the most disadvantage and discrimination, empower and support communities to build capacity and creating a sustainable council that provides valued services to our communities.

### **(b) Policy and Legal**

Local Authorities have a legal duty to ensure adequate provision of facilities for recreational, sporting, cultural and social activities. Improving the health and wellbeing of the Moray community through sport, leisure and recreation is not only an integral part of the local vision, but it is also a national priority. In particular, the report aims to fulfil the aspirations of everyone having access to a network of quality places where you can get involved in sport, as identified as a key objective in sportscotland's Corporate Strategy "Sport for Life". The report also links to the Scottish Government's Active Scotland Outcomes Framework, which aims to improve our active infrastructure – people and places.

### **(c) Financial implications**

To retain the existing Active Schools and Community Sports Hub staff/service the Council would be required to continue the current contribution of £177,000 annually, which would secure the current level of sportscotland funding. Sportscotland have contributed £250,672 towards Active Schools this financial year and have agreed in principle to support this programme for another financial year. If the Council were to reduce or remove its contribution sportscotland would also review their share of the funding and may withdraw from the arrangement.

Over and above this in 2020/21 sportscotland contributed £44,985 towards the Community Sports Hub programme and have agreed in principle to support this programme for another financial year. The Council have contributed in-kind costs towards the Community Sports

Hub programme annually through line management, computer and phone provision, office space etc.

**(d) Risk Implications**

If the Council does not contribute financially to the Active Schools and Community Sports Hub programmes then the risks would include sportscotland withdrawing all their financial contribution to the service which would result in no Active Schools or Community Sports Hub service operating in Moray. The only Sport and Leisure provision then delivered by the Council would be through the provision of Sports Facilities (swimming pools, fitness rooms etc).

Sportscotland also provide additional financial support locally through investments in facilities (such as Moray Sports Centre) and direct to sports clubs. Without an Active Schools and Community Sports Hub Service in place it would make the continuation of these investments more difficult.

Removal of the Active Schools and Community Sports Hub programmes would have a negative impact on the Fit Life Scheme memberships (and income to the Council) as many families subscribe to Fit Life due to the holiday and children's coaching/activity programmes organised and delivered through this Service.

Local volunteer community sports clubs and physical activity groups in Moray would also be negatively impacted as there would no longer be a support mechanism for these clubs to develop and be sustained longer term, therefore the health of our community would suffer.

**(e) Staffing Implications**

If the Council do not contribute financially to the Active Schools and Community Sports Hub programmes then the staffing implications would result in the loss of the 1 FTE Principal Active Schools and Community Sports Hub Officer post, all 7.8 FTE Active Schools Co-ordinators posts, the 1 FTE Community Sports Hub Officer post and all Sports Coaches and Assistants.

Cessation of these programmes would result in redundancy costs due to 9.3FTE within the service being permanent members of staff. A number of sports coaching staff would also receive redundancy payments due to their continual service.

Any workforce implications would be managed through the Council's agreed Transform process which includes looking for suitable alternative employment through redeployment.

**(f) Property**

There are no property implications arising directly from this report.

**(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact**

A number of Active Schools and Community Sports Hub projects target protected groups such as the disabled and also individuals residing in socially deprived areas to ensure they receive opportunities to be

physically active. The ceasing of these programmes would result in reduced opportunities for these protected groups which would have a negative effect on reducing health inequalities.

**(h) Consultations**

In preparing this report, consultations have been undertaken with the Chief Financial Officer, Head of Governance, Strategy and Performance, Head of HR, ICT and Organisational Development, Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer and Ian McGregor (Partnership Manager for sportscotland) whose comments have been incorporated in the report.

**5. CONCLUSION**

**5.1 Committee is asked to note the progress made in regards to the implementation of the Sport and Leisure Business Plan and the closer working that is evident across the sector and to agree to extend the Active Schools and Community Sports Hub programmes for the 2022/23 financial year from existing budget.**

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| Author of Report:  | Kim Slater, Sport and Culture Service Manager  |
| Background Papers: | SPMAN-1315769894-170   |
| Ref:               | SPMAN-1315769894-163 / SPMAN-1315769894-167 /<br>SPMAN-1315769894-168 / SPMAN-1315769894-169 |