
**SPORT, LEISURE & CULTURE TRUST FINANCE – Jedburgh
Leisure Facilities Trust**

**Report by Acting Chief Executive
SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL**

26 January 2022

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to set out a proposal to help mitigate the financial challenges facing the Jedburgh Leisure Facilities Trust (JFLT) following approval of a grant of £127,000, to the Berwickshire Recreation and Education Sports Trust (BREST) at Council on 15 December 2022. The JFLT like BREST has significant increases in their cost base since the COVID 19 pandemic due to rising energy costs and reduced patronage income. The paper seeks approval from Members to provide financial assistance to JFLT of £127,000 from the Council’s recovery fund for the 2022/23 financial year to assist with the costs of a programme of energy efficiency works that will significantly reduce the running costs of the Laidlaw Memorial Pool.**
- 1.2 With increasing energy costs in recent years, the three Leisure Trusts operating in the Borders have seen increasing costs of running their facilities. Live Borders is the largest of the three charitable trusts commissioned by SBC for the delivery of sport, leisure and cultural services operating 6 pools across the Region. The other two Borders based trusts operating swimming pools are the Jedburgh Leisure Facilities Trust, which operates the Laidlaw Memorial Pool in Jedburgh, and Berwickshire Recreation Educational Sports Trust, which operates Duns Swimming Pool. This increase in energy costs has been especially felt in those leisure centres operating swimming pools, with pools facing particular challenges in continuing to operate while keeping their costs of admission affordable to users.
- 1.3 Sport, physical activity and cultural activity play a vital role in delivering Council Plan and Community Plan priorities and outcomes, in particular the priority of ‘Good Health & Wellbeing’, where the people of the Scottish Borders will be “enabled and supported to take control of their health and wellbeing, and enjoy a high quality of life” so that the Borders will have “more people in good health, leading an active lifestyle at every age and stage of life.”

- 1.4 Swimming pools buildings consume significantly more energy per sq m than most other building types; careful design and the operation of pools to conserve energy is therefore of fundamental importance in ensuring their continued viability. Without sufficient funding to assist the Trusts to reduce their energy usage and their carbon footprint, the financial viability of swimming pools in the Borders is at risk. This in turn risks the delivery of the Council's corporate priorities associated with Health and Wellbeing, and the important community benefits they deliver.
- 1.5 Council has already agreed to assist BREST, and this paper seeks approval to also provide the same level of grant funding of £127,000 to the Jedburgh Trust. Discussions with Live Borders are also progressing and will be reported to Council at the earliest opportunity.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Scottish Borders Council agrees to provide one-off financial support to Jedburgh Leisure Facilities Trust in the current financial year of £127,000 from the Recovery Fund to help finance a programme of energy improvement works identified by the Trust at the Laidlaw Memorial pool.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Berwickshire Recreation Educational Sports Trust (BREST), which operates Duns Swimming Pool, Live Borders (LB), and the Jedburgh Leisure Facilities Trust (JLFT), which operates the Laidlaw Memorial Pool, are the three Leisure Trusts in the Borders. Live Borders is the largest of the Trusts and it operates Borders-wide. Live Borders operates 6 pools across the Borders in Eyemouth, Galashiels, Hawick, Kelso, Peebles and Selkirk, on behalf of the Council. Peebles - currently closed following a malicious fire earlier this year - is currently anticipated to re-open at the end of April as detailed in a paper elsewhere on the Council Agenda.
- 3.2 The Council Plan contains a key priority of 'Good Health & Wellbeing', where the people of the Scottish Borders will be "enabled and supported to take control of their health and wellbeing, and enjoy a high quality of life". Similarly, the Community Plan contains an outcome that the Borders will have "more people in good health, leading an active lifestyle at every age and stage of life." Sport, physical activity and culture play a vital role in successful delivery of these priorities and outcomes.
- 3.3 There have been various news articles highlighting the problems facing organisations in the sport and leisure sector across the UK in recent years. The rise in energy costs and sluggish recovery in visitor from the pandemic are two reasons why. These challenges are particularly acute for those operating swimming pools dependant on participant income for a significant part of their funding. It is recognised however that Swimming pools contribute significantly to health and well-being in communities with the benefits of water based exercise for all ages widely acknowledged.
- 3.4 In response Council resolved on 15 December to provide financial assistance to the Berwickshire pool in Duns to help with an ongoing programme of energy works and to consider support to the other Trusts.

4 ENERGY PRESSURES

- 4.1 Discussions have now been held with representatives of the Board of Management of the Jedburgh Facilities Leisure Trust. Information of a programme of works some already undertaken, some planned at the pool has been provided to Council Officials. These works include:-
- Installation of ducting and automatic shutters to direct heat only to where it is needed.
 - Installation of glass beads for pool water filtration and fitting more efficient valves, to reduce the number of backwashes, saving both heat and water costs.
 - Installation of a new better insulated hot water tank to conserve energy.
 - The Trust is also seeking assistance with the cost of installing solar panels on the roof of the building. With a first phase of works above the main pool hall, comprising an array of 73x370w panels which will providing 16,700kwh of energy a year, and a second 73 panel phase of works to double this capacity following building adaptations.

The Trust are also looking at installing new heat generation capacity and a new air handling unit. Taken together, these works will enhance the pool's energy security, limit exposure to future energy price costs and deliver a significant reduction in their CO2 output annually.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

The paper seeks approval from Members to provide the Jedburgh Leisure Facilities Trust with a grant of £127,000 to help meet the costs of energy efficiency works at the Jed pool. This grant, payable from the Council's Recovery Fund, will help to reduce future energy costs and reduce the carbon foot print of the pool.

5.2 Risk and Mitigations

This proposal helps the Council demonstrates a commitment to support local Leisure Trusts financially, which should have a positive impact on communities, helping to contribute to the sustainability of these facilities.

5.3 Integrated Impact Assessment

An IIA checklist has been completed – it is not anticipated that the grant support recommended will of itself eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity between people who share a characteristic (age, disability, gender re-assignment, trans/transgender identity, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race groups, religion or belief, sex-gender identity, and sexual orientation) and those who do not; and foster good relations between people who share a characteristic and those who do not. However, support to the Jed Trust will assist local residents, both those who identify as belonging to an equality group and those who do not, to continue accessing high quality leisure and recreation facilities in Jedburgh, the Cheviot area and the wider Borders.

5.4 Sustainable Development Goals

The grant support recommended will assist the Trust to improve its carbon footprint which ties in with UN SD Goal 7 (Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all).

5.5 Climate Change

This proposal will help ensure minimise energy use in the Berwickshire pool and assist the Borders to reduce its carbon footprint. Further work with the two other Leisure trusts to de-carbonise their operations through reduced energy usage will provide further benefits. The availability of high quality swimming facilities in local communities will mean that people who wish to swim can do so locally rather than travel out-with their community.

5.6 Rural Proofing

This proposal will have a positive effect on the communities of Cheviot ensuring the continuation of a high quality leisure facility in Jedburgh.

5.7 Data Protection Impact Statement

There are no personal data implications arising from the proposals contained in this report.

5.8 **Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

No changes are required to either the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of the proposals in this report.

6 **CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 The Acting Chief Financial Officer, the Acting Chief Corporate Governance Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Director (People Performance & Change), the Clerk to the Council and Corporate Communications are being consulted and any comments received will be reported verbally to Members at Council.

Approved by

David Robertson

Acting Chief Executive

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Background Papers: Nil

Previous Minute Reference: Nil

Note – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. David Robertson can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

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