

Annex B: Urgent Decision report

 WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CHIEF EXECUTIVE – 21 MARCH 2025
Subject	SPORTS ENGLAND FUNDING. SPSF Phase 2
Wards affected	ALL
Accountable member	Councillor Alaric Smith – Executive Member for Finance Alaric.smith@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Giles Hughes – Chief Executive Officer Email: giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk
Report author	Phil Martin - Director of Place Email: phil.martin@westoxon.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To provide an overview of the acceptance of funding offer from Sports England in the amount of £350k.
Annexes	None
Recommendation(s)	That the Chief Executive resolves to: I. Approve the funding application to Sports England following consultation with the Chairman of the Overviews and Scrutiny Committee, Executive Member for Finance and Executive Member for Leisure and Major Projects.
Corporate priorities	• Putting Residents First • Enabling a Good Quality of Life for All • Creating a Better Environment for People and Wildlife • Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency • Working Together for West Oxfordshire
Key Decision	YES
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Director of Finance, Director of Governance

I. BACKGROUND

- I.1 On the 6th March 2025, Sports England notified the Council that it had sums of Swimming Poll Support Fund (SPSF) money unspent and that they could support the Council's 2nd claim from the funding scheme which was previously rejected as they had already agreed to fund the installation of solar PV panels on the Windrush Leisure Centre and could not support multiple claims from each Local Authority at that point in time.
- I.2 The original claim was for the installation of solar PV to provide sustainable energy and shower flow reducers to conserve energy at Carterton Leisure Centre at a cost of circa £350k.
- I.3 The key conditions associated with the funding is that the Council would have to take up the offer by the end of March 2025 and that the project must be complete by end of May 2025.
- I.4 Since notification, a small project team have been exploring the feasibility of accepting the Sports England's funding offer, working through the challenges and risks associated with the extremely tight timescale.
- I.5 The team have reviewed the findings and challenges from the comparable project that took place at the Windrush Leisure Centre and have been proactive in checking and testing the key project stages.
- I.6 Areas that have been tested include:

Planning Permission	This is already in place following the previous PSDS project
DNO conditions and approval	The request has been sent and application for the appropriate certificate submitted
Legal requirements	Legal have been advised that the project may be about to go live and will be able to support in the HMLR registration application
Contractor Materials and availability	GSM have confirmed availability and have reserved engineer and installer time for the project. They have also confirmed that their supply chain can meet the deadline
Financial restrictions	There is no match funding for this grant, it is 100% of project funding which will be certified by supplying invoices and evidence of costs incurred
Roof Condition	Roof works are due for some areas at Carterton Leisure Centre. The Estates team and contractor have acknowledged that they can coordinate any work required to overcome any potential challenges in

	delivering this work. Due to the nature of the installation of the panels, they can be temporarily removed to provide access if any defects need to be repaired either during or after the panels are installed.
Leisure Operator co-operation and acceptance	Officers have liaised with GLL initially and will ensure that they are full on board with the project. As the ultimate aim of the funding is to reduce the costs of energy used for swimming pools this project will be in their benefit as well
Project Management resource	Officers have included the Project Management team in the initial discussions and they will have capacity to support the roof works as this was already in place. The Leisure Contract Lead Officer will support the solar PV installation as was the case for the Windrush LC installation.
Structural survey	This has been commissioned, but as there were no concerns at the PSDS stage this is more for good practice than an expectation that any structural requirements will not be met

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 The Council may wish not to accept the SPSF offered by Sport England due to tight timescales associated with the project.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The Council has been approached by Sports England who have offered to fund its 2nd claim, that was circa £350,000 from the Swimming Pool Funding Scheme, which was previously rejected due to oversubscription of the scheme.
- 3.2 No match funding requirements have been set as a condition of the offer.
- 3.3 If the Council is unable to meet the deadline of the end of May 2025, the Council would be required to return the funding, however the risk of this has been mitigated by a number of actions outlined in Section 5 of this report. The project team will also complete all preparatory works and investigative works before committing to purchase the materials – thus allowing a walkaway point should any unforeseen critical matter arise.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Council would enter into a funding agreement with Sports England, which would include acceptance of the deadline of the end of May 2025, however if due to unforeseen issues this could not be met the Council can return the funding without penalty.

- 4.2 The Council will enter a restriction to the site to confirm that Sport England will be notified should the Centre be put up for closure within the next 10 years
- 4.3 A JCT standard contract will be entered into for the works with the Solar PV contractor

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The key risk associated with the proposal to accept the SPSF funding being offered by Sports England is the very tight timescales for the completion of the project and drawing down of the funds. This has been mitigated by getting a commitment from the supplier who delivered both the Windrush and Elmfield solar PV projects that they are able to meet the deadline set of the 31st May 2025.
- 5.2 A walk-away point will also be established before a major investment in materials takes place.

6. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 6.1 There are no immediate equality implications arising from the report.

7. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are clear climate related benefits associated with the installation of solar PV panels on the Carterton Leisure Centre as these will deliver clean sustainable energy that will help to offset the use of fossil fuels currently used.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 None

(END)