



Cabinet

14 October 2008

Report Title: **Free Swimming – A 2012 Legacy from DCMS**

Forward Plan reference number (if applicable):

Report of: **Director of Adult, Culture and Community Services**

Wards(s) affected: **All**

Report for: **Key Decision**

1. Purpose

1.1 To advise Members of the DCMS 'Free Swimming' grant and programme, and the related opportunities and implications for Haringey.

2. Introduction by Cabinet Member (if necessary)

- 2.1 Clearly the ' offer ' from DCMS presents both an opportunity and challenge for the Authority, in contributing to the development of a lasting legacy from London 2012.
- 2.2 Extending Free Swimming to both our older and younger residents will contribute to our health and wellbeing priority, and in particular our sport and physical activity participation target. Full engagement of the programme will also offer the opportunity to enhance our existing Leisure Centres refurbishment project.
- 2.3 The DCMS revenue grant(s) will meet the full cost of implementation for the over 60's, but only around 25% of the cost for under 16's. Thus I am seeking your support for an additional revenue investment of £175K , through the imminent Pre Business Plan Review process.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That Members approve, in principle, the engagement of the DCMS 'Free Swimming' offer as outlined in the options at paragraph 12.5.3 of this report.
- 3.2 That Members prioritise funding support for the initiative through the imminent Pre Business Plan Review process.

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| Report Authorised by: Mun Thong Phung, Director of Adult, Culture and Community Services |
| Contact Officer: John Morris, Assistant Director – Recreation Services John.morris@haringey.gov.uk 020 8489 5602 |
| <p>4. Chief Financial Officer Comments</p> <p>4.1 Authorities have to confirm by the 15th October 2008 whether they wish to participate in providing free swimming for under 16s. Subject to confirmation on the level of grant, the anticipated net cost to the local authority in 2009/10 is £175k. If this initiative is agreed, funding options will need to be considered during the Pre Business Plan Review process.</p> |
| <p>5. Comments of the Head of Legal Services</p> <p>5.1 It is a matter for Members' discretion whether to take up the free swimming offer and which of the options in paragraph 12.5 to pursue. The grant aid from DCMS would be subject to a formal agreement and the conditions set out in appendix A. There are no other legal implications arising directly out of this report.</p> |
| <p>6. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985</p> <p>6.1 Sport and Physical Activity Improvement Plan – HariActive (Cabinet 16.9.08)</p> <p>6.2</p> |

7. Strategic Implications

- 7.1 The Council and partners are committed to improving health and wellbeing, and in particular have agreed a LAA Stretch Target to increase adult sport and physical activity participation by 4% by 2010. Extending Free Swimming to more older people and young people could make a real contribution to achieving this target.
- 7.2 The Council's recently revised Pricing Policy already seeks to target subsidy on the basis of 'ability to pay' and in particular provides 'free swimming' for over 65 residents. Clearly the DCMS offer would extend free access, although it wouldn't meet all of the additional cost, particularly for under 16s.
- 7.3 The Council has also already committed capital investment resources to refurbish existing facilities between 2008/9 – 2010/11, including pool plant and infrastructure, which could be matched/ enhanced through a bid to the capital fund (subject to engaging both revenue opportunities). The Council might also revisit the BSF programme and potential opportunities to improve provision at Northumberland Park School.
- 7.4 Sports and Physical Activity provision clearly makes a particular contribution to both health intervention/ prevention and children and young people's activities/ provision.

Thus scope exists to work with a wider range of services/ agencies to develop our approach and funding of a more ambitious programme which is being progressed through our Wellbeing and Children's partnership structures.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 The key implication relates to the loss of £225k revenue from current levels of under 16 use if the Council were to agree to free use for this group. This would be partly offset by the level of grant, which will be confirmed by the end of September, and is likely to be in the region of £50k. Thus the net shortfall is anticipated to be around £175k.
- 8.2 The Council's current budget doesn't include funding to meet the additional net cost of this initiative in 2009/10 and 2010/11. This has been factored into the imminent Pre Business Plan Review process, and will need to be covered by other Council cost savings, revenue support, or external funding such as Area Based Grant.
- 8.3 DCMS has already confirmed a grant allocation of £39,367 per annum to provide free swimming for over 60 customers. Given the Council's existing policy commitment to over 65s free use, the level of grant would offset the loss of income from the current level of over 60 use, with some scope to fund additional programme opportunities to encourage and increase over 60s participation.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1 It is a matter for Members' discretion whether to take up the free swimming offer and which of the options in paragraph 12.5 to pursue. The grant aid from DCMS would be subject to a formal agreement and the conditions set out in appendix A. There are no other legal implications arising directly out of this report.

10. Equalities Implications

- 10.1 The 'Free Swim' initiative will benefit both young and older people, in encouraging a healthier lifestyle through regular swimming participation.

11. Consultation

- 11.1 The DCMS 'Free Swim' offer has been discussed and received support internally with Children's Services, and externally with HTPCT through the Health and Emotional Wellbeing Outcome Group (WBPB).

12. Background

12.1 Context

- 12.1.1 More than 80% of local authorities have expressed an interest in the full scheme, including the majority of London boroughs.

12.2 The Proposal

12.2.1 The DCMS 'Free Swimming' Programme grant offer (see appendix A) has 3 components:

- a) Over 60s – national provision of £15m to be allocated based upon a population formula. Haringey has been allocated £39,367.
- b) Under 16s – national provision of £25m to be allocated as above. Haringey will be advised of its allocation by the end of September 2008.
- c) Capital – national provision of £10m in 2008/9 as 'reward' and scheme/ bid development, and £50m for 2009/10-2010/11. The programme and funding will be administered by Sport England.

12.3 **The Conditions**

12.3.1 The key conditions that apply include:

- Need to sign up to (a) and (b) in proposal above to access (c)
- Free Swimming applies to provision in normal public swimming opening hours/ outside normal school hours for under 16s
- We will receive notification of under 16 grant allocation by the end of September and have until 15th October 2008 to confirm our decision
- Funding is for 2009/10 and 2010/11 only. Funding thereafter will be considered through the main spending review process.

12.4 **Issues and Risks**

12.4.1 In addition to the financial implications set out at 8. above, the key issues and risks include:

- Potential cross borough transfer /movement of usage/customers, particularly as DCMS have indicated that the 'offer' can't be restricted to borough residents.
- An extension of 'Free' provision requires an amendment to the Council's current pricing policy, which is based upon the 'ability to pay'.
- The level of demand and use exceeds the capacity of our existing facilities, and/or displaces other paying customers.

12.5 **Options**

12.5.1 Don't engage the DCMS 'Free Swim' programme. Whilst this has no direct revenue implication, there would be a financial risk relating to potential customer movement to facilities in neighbouring boroughs (subject to their position on the offer).

12.5.2 Accept and engage the over 60s grant funding of £39,367, and develop/ extend the existing free swimming programme. No significant budget or management implications.

12.5.3 Engage both over 60s and under 16s revenue grants and Capital funding applications. But will need to identify additional £175k per annum revenue support for 2009/10 and 2010/11.

13. **Appendices**

Appendix A - DCMS briefing – Free Swimming Programme (pdf)