

Item: 7

Community Development Fund Sub-committee: 22 February 2024.

Application Number 0/5/8/88.

Orkney Athletic Running Club SCIO.

High Jump Equipment and Housing for Photo Finish Equipment.

**Report by Corporate Director for Enterprise and Sustainable
Regeneration.**

1. Purpose of Report

To consider an application from Orkney Athletic Running Club SCIO for assistance towards the purchase of upgraded high jump equipment and a portacabin to house recently acquired photo finish equipment.

2. Recommendations

The Sub-committee is invited to note:

2.1.

That Orkney Athletic Running Club SCIO has applied for assistance from the Community Development Fund towards the purchase of upgraded high jump equipment and a portacabin to house recently acquired photo finish equipment.

2.2.

That Orkney Athletic Running Club SCIO has applied for match funding, amounting to £5,340, from the Community Led Local Development Fund and £11,605 from Sportscotland, towards the project.

2.3.

That messages of support have been received from the undernoted community groups and individuals:

- Liam McArthur MSP.
- Scottish Athletics Limited.

2.4.

That, as Orkney Athletic Running Club SCIO use the athletic track and facilities at Pickaquoy Centre, Kirkwall, Pickaquoy Centre Trust has provided written permission for the portacabin to be sited by the running track for its lifespan, with a minimum

expectation of 15 years, and agreed to cover the additional cost for installation and ongoing electricity supply when the portacabin is in use.

It is recommended:

2.5.

That, a grant amounting to 50% of total eligible costs, up to a maximum sum of £17,122, to be met from the Community Development Fund, be offered to Orkney Athletic Running Club SCIO towards the purchase of upgraded high jump equipment and a portacabin to house recently acquired photo finish equipment, subject to:

- Confirmation of the subsidy control position to the satisfaction of the Corporate Director for Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration.
- Confirmation of a full funding package.

2.6.

That powers be delegated to the Corporate Director for Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration, in consultation with the Head of Finance, to authorise advance payment of the grant, referred to at paragraph 2.5 above, on receipt of invoices, if required in order to assist cash flow requirements of Orkney Athletic Running Club SCIO.

2.7.

That powers be delegated to the Corporate Director for Enterprise and Sustainable Regeneration, in consultation with the Head of Legal and Governance, to determine whether appropriate security can be put in place and, if so, to conclude an Agreement, on the Council's standard terms and conditions, with Orkney Athletic Running Club SCIO in respect of the funding, detailed at paragraphs 2.5 and 2.6 above.

3. Background

3.1.

Orkney Athletic Running Club SCIO is a registered charity (number SC051316). The main objective of Orkney Athletic Running Club SCIO is to provide opportunities for everyone who wants to participate in running or athletics in Orkney. The organisation aims to promote health within the community with a focus on high standards of training and the chance to compete at a level that will allow athletes to reach their individual potential.

3.2.

Arthur Groundwater started what is known today as Orkney Athletic and Running Club back in 1987, coaching a handful of athletes at Stromness Academy. Originally called Team Raven Athletics Club, the team changed its name to Stromness Athletic Club and affiliated with Scottish Athletics in 1988. When the Pickaquooy Centre opened in Kirkwall in 1997, the Club decided to make the track at Picky their home and rebrand as Orkney Athletic Club.

3.3.

Orkney Athletic and Running Club was formed with the merger of Orkney Athletic Club and Orkney Running Club in 2021. This combined entity achieved charitable status on 6 October 2021 and operates under the management of a board of Trustees. It currently has over 160 members, the majority of whom are Junior Members (9-18 years of age).

3.4.

Over the past 18 months, the Club has purchased an electronic start system and photo finish equipment at a cost of £18,240 and spent over £1,500 on training volunteers. This leap forward in athletics in Orkney enables athletes to have fully ratified performances on their home track, and thus enables qualification for national and international competitions and increase opportunities for the highest-level team selections. The photo finish equipment is currently transported to the track and stored in mobile trailers generously donated by friends on a competition day and then removed. With the track resurfacing imminent this movement of equipment will no longer be a viable option having heavy trailers cross the track. The Club has heavily invested funds and volunteer time to purchase this equipment and train volunteers. A safe, suitable storage facility is needed to protect the investment the Club has made. Using this equipment is essential to enable the athletes to build their profile for competition.

3.5.

Orkney Athletic Running Club SCIO high jump mats failed the TrackMark assessment in June 2023, meaning it is no longer permissible for any athletics competition to take place at the Pickaquoy Centre. TrackMark is UK Athletics' new quality assurance scheme for outdoor Track and Field Athletics facilities. A venue that achieves TrackMark will be recognised by UKA as having well managed, compliant facilities that are accessible to participants of all abilities. Effectively without this accreditation Orkney Athletic Running Club SCIO is unable to hold accredited competitions within Orkney.

3.6.

Orkney Athletic Running Club SCIO will not be able to gain a Competition Licence for any competition going forward until new high jump equipment is purchased. A Level 1 licence is required for all athlete performances to be nationally recognised at home competitions and at the 2025 Island Games Orkney Athletic Running Club SCIO requires a Level 2 licence. Only by achieving TrackMark status will the governing body Scottish Athletics be able to provide the required competition licence to go ahead. The purchase of new high jump mat, and associated storage facilities is an essential step towards this accreditation.

4. Project Proposal

4.1.

The overall project aim is to ensure athletes future proofing Orkney Athletic Running Club's SCIO ability to provide the opportunity for athletes to achieve ratified performances on the track and in high jump. Enabling athletes to meet their own potential, both within Orkney and also including elite athletes at a national level.

4.2.

Having a portacabin to house the photo finish equipment and officials' team on event days to protect the Club's substantial investment of this specialised equipment and enable the officials to carry out their job in a suitable environment.

4.3.

The enhancement proposal includes the following:

- Purchase of Portacabin to house photo finish equipment.
- Purchase of High Jump mat and protective cover.

4.4.

The Pickaquoy Centre Trust have given their full support and permission for the siting of the portacabin on the trackside with cabling works to be completed at the same time as the track restoration to minimise disruption to the track itself. The minimal electrical costs will be taken on by the Pickaquoy Centre Trust. Pre-planning advice is being sought and any grant award will be subject to planning consents being in place.

4.5.

The project costs and proposed funding arrangements are outlined in the table below (inclusive of VAT as Orkney Athletic Running Club SCIO is not VAT registered):

Project Details.	Cost.
Portacabin.	£11,034.
High Jump Equipment.	£23,210.
Total.	£34,244.
Project Financing.	Amount.
Crown Estate Community Led Development (16.11%).	£5,517.
Sportscotland (33.89%).	£11,605.
Community Development Fund (50%).	£17,122.
Total.	£34,244.

* Confirmed.

4.6.

The Crown Estate Community Led Local Development and Sportscotland match funding has been applied for and a decision is anticipated on this application soon.

4.7.

Orkney Athletic Running Club SCIO has been continuing to explore other potential match funding. Orkney Athletic Running Club SCIO is keen to progress this project quickly in order to re-establish the competition grading of the facilities available to the team. However, the Community Development Fund grant is requested on the basis of Community Development Fund being the final element to secure delivery of the equipment, and the Club continues to explore other potential means of funding. Therefore, if Orkney Athletic Running Club SCIO apply for other funding in the future and are successful, any additional funding will lead to a reduction in the offer of grant made by the Community Development Fund.

4.8.

This project will help the Orkney Athletic Running Club SCIO to achieve its core objective to continue to operate as a competitive organisation and, therefore, to continue to promote, encourage and develop athletics in Orkney, creating opportunities from age 9 years and upwards, benefitting their health, wellbeing and creating opportunities to compete at local and national levels.

5. Project Appraisal

5.1.

The proposals put forward in the Orkney Athletic Running Club SCIO Development Plan, which accompanies this application, outline the intention to purchase a high quality portacabin to house the photo finish equipment that the club invested in last year. The upgraded high jump mat and protective cover will allow their athletes to register competitive timings for all their competitions and the cover will ensure equipment is well maintained. These enhancements will enable the organisation to continue to provide opportunities for athletes in years to come, including to enable competitive athletics as part of the Orkney Island Games in 2025.

5.2.

Messages of support have been received from the undernoted groups and individuals:

- Liam McArthur MSP.
- Scottish Athletics Limited.

5.3.

The Community Development Fund and its predecessor, the Community Development Fund for the New Millennium, have supported a wide range of development projects involving enhancements to sports facilities, including:

- Kirkwall Kayak Club – Purchase of kayaks and associated equipment.
- Enhancements to Orkney Golf Club.
- Enhancements to Stromness Golf Club.
- Orkney Amateur Weightlifting Club – Purchase of gym equipment.

5.4.

With regard to Orkney Athletic Running Club SCIO application, the following is an assessment and evaluation against each of the approved Community Development Fund assessment and evaluation criteria:

5.4.1. Evidence of Need

- This project will benefit all present and future members and volunteers of Orkney Athletic and Running Club, as well as an unquantifiable wider community benefit. At present they have 160 active members who will directly benefit. This is because without the TrackMark accreditation for the high jump equipment, no accredited athletics competition may be held at the Pickaquoy Centre.
- The Club has also already purchased photo-stop equipment which is being kept in sub-optimal conditions, which will reduce the lifespan and availability of this equipment to the club. A new portacabin will resolve this as well as providing welfare facilities on track for officials.
- With the Orkney Island Games in 2025, the next 18 months is set to be the most demanding period the Club has ever faced. If the equipment is not TrackMark accredited the Club will not be able to compete in the high jump event and any effort applied to preparing for the 2025 games by the Club would be abortive.
- The purchase of this equipment will allow re-accrediting of the Pickaquoy Centre high jump facility to enable Orkney Athletic Running Club SCIO to compete once more in the high jump competitions and is thus an opportunity for an important legacy for the future.

5.4.2. Achievability

- Orkney Athletic Running Club SCIO is run by a board of 9 Trustees, who represent a wide demographic within the island population and possess a wide range of skills and experience to carry through the project.
- The club has researched the equipment needs to achieve TrackMark accreditation, and suitable facilities for the photo-stop equipment. The project is therefore considered fit for purpose equipment to deliver the desired outcomes.
- The technology to assist Orkney Athletic Running Club SCIO to deliver this project, as well as the technical skills of installation and maintenance, is readily available locally. As such, this project is considered achievable by Orkney Athletic Running Club SCIO.

5.4.3. Sustainability

- Future proofing Orkney Athletic Running Club SCIO's ability to provide the opportunity for athletes to achieve ratified performances on the track and in High Jump by gaining the required Trackmark status.

- The portacabin will extend the life of the photo-stop equipment which is likely to become malfunctional sooner without a protective facility.
- Orkney Athletic Running Club SCIO has looked at all current equipment and sourced appropriate installations for the facility.
- The old high jump equipment is set to be donated to the North Isles Sports Committee.

5.4.4. Serving the local public and having lasting benefits

- Orkney Athletic Running Club SCIO is a long-established organisation offering opportunities for all age groups.
- The Club has invested money and volunteers' time in photo finish equipment and training, the safe storage of the equipment for years to come is essential.
- The club hosts various running events throughout the year as well as competitions for young people encouraging local people to get active.
- The equipment will enable competitive accreditation and secure a longer lifespan for photo stop equipment already purchased.

5.4.5. Opportunities provided or upgraded

- This project will enable Orkney Athletic Running Club SCIO to continue to provide safe, fit for purpose competitive high quality sporting opportunities for all age group in the islands.
- Having a portacabin to house the photo finish equipment and officials' team on event days to protect the club's substantial investment of this specialised equipment and enable the officials to carry out their job in a suitable environment.

5.4.6. Enriching quality of life

- The project will ensure the club continues to provide opportunities for all members of the community, regardless of age or social and economic backgrounds. This includes participating in events and volunteering helps individuals' social cohesion and wellbeing.

5.4.7. Value for money

- Orkney Athletic Running Club SCIO has ensured value for money by obtaining competitive quotes for the new high jump equipment and portacabin.

5.4.8. Partnership funding

- There is the potential of securing funding amounting to £11,605 from Sports Scotland and £5,517 from the Community Led Development Fund.
- Orkney Athletic Running Club SCIO is continuing to pursue other potential funding sources, with this application to Community Development Fund intended as a last resort option if other funding sources are not successful.

6. Links to Council Plan

6.1.

The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Council Plan strategic priority theme of Strengthening our communities.

6.2.

The proposals in this report relate directly to Priority C1 social care/community led support of the Council Delivery Plan.

7. Links to Local Outcomes Improvement Plan

The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan priority of Sustainable Development.

8. Financial Implications

8.1.

In November 2022, a further £1,000,000 was allocated to the Community Development Fund, with £100,000 ring-fenced for Community Councils.

8.2.

At present there is sufficient budget within the 2022 Community Development Fund tranche to consider this project.

9. Legal Aspects

9.1.

Subject to section 9.3, there are no legal constraints to the recommendations in this report being implemented and the relevant powers are contained in section 20 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003.

9.2.

If grant assistance is to be provided by the Council, a legally binding agreement will require to be entered into between the Council and the recipient setting out the terms on which the funding is being provided.

9.3.

Any financial assistance provided by the Council will need to be assessed to determine if the financial assistance proposed meets the definition of a subsidy under section 2 of the Subsidy Control Act 2022 (the 2022 Act). If it is determined that the financial assistance is a subsidy, then it will need to be provided in a manner compliant with the provisions of the 2022 Act.

9.4.

In accordance with the Community Development Fund Guidance, if grant assistance is to be provided by the Council and the total project cost exceeds £10,000, then the Community Development Fund Sub-committee will determine whether appropriate security should be taken over any appropriate heritable property improved as a result of the project.

10. Contact Officers

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