

**From:** Clair Bell, Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services  
Simon Jones, Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport

**To:** Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee – 6 March 2025

**Subject:** Kent County Council Capital Grant Scheme for Sport

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Past Pathway of report:** n/a

**Future Pathway of report:** n/a

**Electoral Division:** All Divisions

**Summary:** The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of the Kent County Council Capital Grant Scheme for Sport, including its financial and wider impact, and the role of this investment given the backdrop of the capital funding landscape for Kent based sports clubs and their facilities.

**Recommendation(s):** The Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee is asked to note the report and make any comments to the Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Active Kent and Medway (formerly Kent Sport) is the hosted service that provides strategic leadership, direction and support for the delivery of sport and physical activity across the county. The service promotes the physical, mental, and social benefits associated with being active.
- 1.2 In May 2023, Active Kent and Medway launched [Move Together](#); the Countywide strategy for sport and physical activity presented to the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee in November 2022.
- 1.3 The Kent County Council Capital Grant Scheme for Sport is administered by Active Kent and Medway and aims to improve facilities for the Kent community. It is currently a £37,500 annual grant that supports the purchase of community equipment and facility improvements whilst aiming to leverage in funding from other organisations and increasing participation in sport and physical activity.
- 1.4 The scope of the grant includes:
  - Provision of facilities for the community of Kent
  - Purchase of new community 'fixed' equipment such as: storage containers, cricket nets and climbing walls.

- Improvements to existing buildings and sites or conversion of redundant buildings
- Levering funding from other organisations into key schemes in Kent, and demonstrating partnership
- Providing specialist facilities or equipment for disabled people
- Increase participation in physical activity

1.5 Applications to the grant are made via the Kent County Council [website](#). Grant applications are discussed via an internal panel who make recommendations to be reviewed by KCC's Head of Strategic Development and Place and subsequently the Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services. Once the application has received approval, Active Kent and Medway work closely with applicants on their project journey to ensure its success and support them with relevant monitoring and evaluation to quantify this and share best practice with others.

1.6 Examples of what has been funded include:

- Club House Extensions/Refurbishments
- LED light conversions
- Bore Holes to combat the effects of drought and alleviate pressures on water supply.
- Artificial Pitches
- Maintenance of grass pitches
- Storage
- Safety Boats
- Access Ramps

1.7 Since COVID-19, the rise in the cost of building materials and labour has created significant challenges for clubs and organisations. For example, the cost of laying an artificial grass football pitch was c£500,000-£600,000 pre pandemic and now it is c£1.2-£1.4million.

1.8 Open funding for sports infrastructure projects is extremely limited. The Football Foundation (Football) is the only major contributor to capital projects, with England Cricket Board (Cricket) offering small scale funding for targeted projects and The Lawn Tennis Association (Tennis) offering loans.

1.9 The Capital Grant does not cover 100% of the costs of the project, with match funding a mandatory requirement. Where possible Active Kent and Medway will work with applicants to identify alternative sources of funding. E.g Football Foundation; Local Authority S106/CIL contributions and waste distribution grants.

1.10 Crowdfunding has offered good support to clubs, however, the Kent County Council Spacehive offer does not support capital projects.

## **2. Impact of the Capital Grant Scheme**

2.1 Over the last five years the Kent County Council Capital Grant Scheme for Sport has supported 104 sports clubs and organisations across Kent to

leverage in over £10million of external investment into infrastructure across the County.

- 2.2 Active Kent and Medway works with clubs and organisations to support facility improvement focused projects that support the local community to become more active. Through the fund a range of impacts have been reported including increased community usage, expansion of sporting offer, enhanced local reputation, reduced energy bills and carbon footprint and improvements to lighting that have reduced light pollution.
- 2.3 For many organisations the grant offers opportunities to develop and strengthen ties with the local communities allowing them to respond to need, identify opportunities and break down barriers. The fund has opened safe spaces for the community, helped promoted intergenerational activity and understand one another and encourage communities to access other services in their local area.
- 2.4 Quotes from supported organisations include:

*“The support will enable us to increase and improve our playing facilities to support our current and future demand and help create a more attractive environment to encourage players and spectators to enjoy a club which has been at the centre of the community over the last 150 years.”* Headcorn Cricket Club, Maidstone

*“Without KCC support I don't think we would have been successful with other larger applications. The grant showed the bigger funders that the club had local support.”* Europa Weightlifting Club, Dartford

*“We have now gained our independence knowing whatever we plan for the future, we can do it in complete confidence and not worry our club will still be here in years to come. We can only build on what we have got in a very positive way.”* Gateway Bowls Club, Dover

*“The committee greatly appreciates the support it has received from KCC - and hopes that KCC will continue to offer grant support to Sports Clubs going forwards. The amounts given may not seem large in the overall picture, but without them communities will struggle to keep their facilities in good shape, particularly when the when unforeseen problems arise. It is hard to put a value on the benefits of having good sports and wellbeing facilities available in rural communities, but I have no doubt they provide a safety net that catches people who would otherwise need support from Social Services.”* Biddenden Village Hall and Sports Committee, Ashford

### **3. Contribution to KCC Strategic Priorities**

- 3.1 The Grant Scheme aligns with Framing Kent's Future and the Greener Kent initiative, where sustainable infrastructure options are prioritised for grant funding and best practice and case studies are shared across services.
- 3.2 It also supports Securing Kent's Future as many sites are leased to clubs and community groups, with the County Council as the freeholder. The grant scheme ensures the maintenance, preservation, and quality of this community

infrastructure in Kent, with little to no cost to Kent County Council. The leverage into county infrastructure represents £12 of external investment for every £1 spent and by improving facilities, clubs are better placed to host sporting and community events which contribute to the local economy and diversifies their offer.

- 3.3 Grant recipients' promotion of Kent County Council investment into local facilities present a positive and tangible way to show positive action in support of local communities. To create business efficiencies and maximise investment there is an opportunity to consider combining and aligning the Capital Grant Scheme for Sport with the Kent County Council Village and Community Hall Grant Scheme.

#### **4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1 In 2024/25, £38,000 is allocated for the Grant Scheme in the Capital Programme ([Budget Book 2024-25](#), Appendix B, Row Ref 3, page 15). The £38,000 is funded via a revenue contribution to capital and the allocation for future years will be determined via the Medium-Term Financial Plan process.
- 4.2 Active Kent and Medway is hosted by Kent County Council and in addition to this support, currently receives £300k per annum in funding via a Kent County Council Public Health Grant and £734.5k per annum (£3,452,950 over 5 years) of external funding from Sport England to support the delivery of Move Together.

#### **5. Equalities implications**

- 5.1 The Kent County Council Capital Grant supports [Move Together](#) which has undergone an [Equality Impact Assessment](#). Tackling inequalities and widening access to facilities is a key criteria in investment decisions, and all applicants are required to articulate how they will do this. All grant recipients are required to provide a copy of their equality policy.

#### **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1 The Kent County Council Capital Grant Scheme is a relatively small grant fund, which achieves big things. The grant brings communities and sport together, and leverages in millions of pounds of investment into facilities, improving infrastructure across the County (some within the ownership of the Authority), enabling Kent residents the opportunity to be active.
- 6.2 The funding supports future proofing clubs, enabling them to generate revenue for themselves and sustaining them for the future. It supports tourism and inspires others to visit and compete in Kent. It continues to support making sport and physical activity more accessible and attractive for those less active and the next generation.

## 7. Recommendation

**Recommendation:** The Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee is asked to note the report and make any comments to the Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services.

## 8. Background Documents

- [Kent County Council Capital Grant Scheme for Sport Case Studies](#)
- [Kent County Council Capital Grant Scheme Borehole Project](#)
- [Active Kent and Medway Move Together Strategy](#)

## 9. Contact details

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