

Transport and Environment Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 19 August 2021

All Ability Cycling – Grant Award

Executive/routine	Routine
Wards	All
Council Commitments	17

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended Transport and Environment Committee approves an award of £71,000 to the Thistle Foundation for 2021-22 to support the delivery of a service to allow adaptive cycles to be available for disabled people across the city.

Paul Lawrence

Executive Director of Place

Contact: Daisy Narayanan, Senior Manager, Placemaking and Mobility

E-mail: Daisy.Narayanan@edinburgh.gov.uk

All Ability Cycling – Grant Award

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 In May 2021, Council approved a budget of £71,000 to support the delivery of a service to provide disabled people and people with long term health conditions with the opportunity of using adaptive cycles as part of service investment options funding.
- 2.2 The Edinburgh All Ability Bikes Centre (ABC) service was previously run by the charity Cycling UK but ceased in May 2021 due to issues with securing funding. Officers have been liaising with Cycling UK in recent months to establish a way forward where the service provided can continue to be available.
- 2.3 It is proposed to award grant funding to Thistle Foundation, a charity based in Craigmillar which had significant involvement in the delivery of ABC both housing equipment and delivering sessions for service users in partnership with Cycling UK.
- 2.4 This report seeks permission to proceed and award £71,000 to the Thistle Foundation, in accordance with the Council's Grant Standing Orders.

3. Background

- 3.1 [The Thistle Foundation](#) (Thistle) is a health and wellbeing charity based in Craigmillar, providing wellbeing support to people living with disabilities and long-term health conditions. People can access support at the Centre of Wellbeing in Craigmillar; via GP practices in Midlothian and via community engagement activities.
- 3.2 In April 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic began, Thistle closed the Centre of Wellbeing and redesigned their activities to be a blend of remote phone and online delivery.
- 3.3 In February 2021, Thistle had partnered with Cycling UK, and had accepted some of the adaptive cycles to be located at their premises in order to continue to run future sessions in partnership.
- 3.4 In May 2021, Cycling UK ceased to offer the "All Ability Bikes Centre (ABC)" service, as there had been issues in securing the funding.

- 3.5 There is significant [case study evidence](#) which demonstrates the positive impact this service can have on the health and wellbeing of service users.
- 3.6 In May 2021, Council agreed a contribution of £71,000 towards the delivery of a service to be able to cater for the needs of disabled people, to enable people to use adaptive cycles to experience the physical and mental health benefits where standard bicycles and tuition would not be suitable for their needs.
- 3.7 Now that the COVID-19 restrictions have eased, Thistle's premises have re-opened, and they recognise that there is a greater need than ever to support people, to counter the negative impacts experienced over the past eighteen months.
- 3.8 Thistle have developed a programme of initiatives to aim to address this and are seeking funding to enable delivery of these to take place over the remainder of the financial year.

4. Main report

- 4.1 Thistle had significant involvement in the project previously delivered by Cycling UK, which involved taster sessions for their service users in February 2020.
- 4.2 Equipment was then transferred to Thistle in February 2021, where more regular sessions could take place.
- 4.3 Current restraints in Thistle's budget has resulted in having to restrict capacity for the sessions, and they can currently only run limited sessions for former ABC service users, as opposed to being able to offer to Thistle service users more widely. There is strong demand from the organisation to provide a greater level due to the positive impacts on service users, and the organisation's commitment to develop their physical activity programme.
- 4.4 In May 2021, Council agreed a contribution of £71,000 towards the delivery of a service which offers opportunities for people experiencing long term health conditions and disability to have access to adaptive cycles.
- 4.5 This funding would enable the employment of two full time practitioners to work in both Craigmillar and Saughton and would cover overhead costs; cycle leader training; and engagement.
- 4.6 In accordance of the Council's [Grant Standing Orders](#), grant awards of above £25,000 require Committee approval.
- 4.7 Subject to funding award, Thistle would develop a new initiative "Thistle Outdoors: A Green Recovery from COVID" based in both Craigmillar and Saughton Park, which would set out to rebuild the inclusive cycling programme previously hosted by Cycling UK, and integrate this into a wider physical activity offer of promoting walking and cycling in the city; promoting peer involvement and development of peer-led community based initiatives to promote wellbeing through physical activity.

- 4.8 The sessions would primarily benefit people living with disabilities and long term health conditions, and the secondary impacts such as isolation; frustration in not being able to carry out daily tasks; and the mental health impacts.
- 4.9 This service is intended to offer access to face-to-face support which has been difficult or impossible to deliver during the COVID-19 pandemic, where many people do not have the means or ability to access remote support. There are important social and health benefits to participants in this initiative, many of whom are experiencing multiple challenges in daily life.
- 4.10 Consideration is being given to a longer-term option for providing this service.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 If Committee approve this grant award, a grant agreement will be drafted between the Council and The Thistle Foundation, which will set out the expectations of both parties in terms of funding, timescales, outcomes and outputs.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 The expected cost of this programme is £71,000 and could be met from the investment agreed by Council in May 2021.
- 6.2 It is imperative to provide Thistle with the means to make effective use of the funds, so subject to Committee approval, the funds would be awarded promptly, to allow for activities to begin during the late summer months where there is the greatest chance of securing participants.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 There are likely to be positive health and wellbeing impacts on people with protected characteristics, by continuing to deliver a known need.
- 7.2 There are likely to be wider positive community benefits associated with peer-led activities and community-based activities.
- 7.3 As sessions are proposed to run at both Saughton and Craigmillar locations, there are no known disbenefits in terms of access to location amongst former ABC service users as a result of this change.

8. Background reading/external references

None.

9. Appendices

None.