

DECISION NO: 18/028 *For Member Services use only*

Concurrence No: 66202

Action under delegated authority of Chief Executive	
Action under delegated authority of Director of Finance and Cabinet Member for Finance	X
Action taken by Chief Executive in consultation with Cabinet Member(s)	

Subject: Installation of pool lifts at Laura Trott Leisure Centre and John Warner Centre

Signature and designation of officer(s) taking action:

<p>_____ Chief Executive</p>	<p><u>20/3/18</u> Date</p>	<p>_____ Director of Finance</p>	<p><u>20-3-18</u> Date</p>
		<p>_____ Head of Financial Planning and Reporting</p>	<p><u>20/03/18</u> Date</p>

**Name of Cabinet Member(s) Consulted:**

I have been consulted and concur with the proposals set out below:

Councillor Ken Ayling  
Cabinet Member for Finance

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 20/3/18

Councillor Dee Hart  
Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 20/3/18

Name of any member who has declared a conflict of interest in relation to this decision: \_\_\_\_\_

**THIS DOCUMENT WILL BE PUBLISHED ON THE COUNCIL'S WEBSITE**

The report overleaf sets out the decision to be taken, the reasons for the decision, and the details of alternative options, if any, considered and rejected.

Officer decisions are available for public inspection, both at the Borough Offices and on the Council's website, for a period of six years after the decision is made. Background papers are available for four years.

**RECOMMENDED that:**

- a) The arrangements for spending the extra Disabled Facilities Grant awarded by the Government in Autumn 2017 be approved;
- b) Approval is given for an exception to Contract Standing Orders as there is only one suitable supplier of the specialist equipment; and
- c) Approval be given to enter into a contract with Poolpod Products Ltd for the supply, installation and maintenance of pool lifts at John Warner Sports Centre and Laura Trott Leisure Centre.

**Purpose**

In the Autumn 2017 Budget, the Government awarded local authorities in England an additional £42m in Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) capital funding. Broxbourne Borough Council was allotted £67,868. This additional funding has to be spent by 31 March 2018, and can only be spent on home adaptations for people who have a disability or on other social care capital projects. This report proposes using most of the funding to purchase pool lifts to enable full disabled access to the swimming pools at the John Warner Sports Centre and the Laura Trott Leisure Centre. The remainder of the grant would be spent on a small capital project now underway to create an extra room at a homeless hostel.

**Background**

By the time the extra Government funding was allocated, the Council had transferred responsibility for disabled facilities grants in the Borough to the new Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency (HHIA). The HHIA is still recruiting staff and not in a position to spend the grant by the Government deadline.

Various uses for the funding have been considered. One of the Borough's hostels for homeless people, Lawrence House, is being refurbished and an extra bedroom is being created. The works to create an extra bedroom can be counted as capital works for social care, as a high percentage of homeless people are vulnerable. This project will only require a small proportion of the total grant. There is no other suitable capital project in Housing.

The Head of Property has confirmed that there is no requirement for further capital works to improve disabled access to Council buildings in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act. However, access to the swimming pools at both Laura Trott Leisure Centre and John Warner Sports Centre is currently limited for people who have a mobility impairment. For wheelchair users, access is by hoist, with the assistance of one of the staff. This is slow, singles out the swimmer to the public gaze and forces them to rely on another person. There is no assistance for the much larger number of potential swimmers who, due to disability, infirmity or injury, do not feel able to walk down the steps or to use a pool ladder, but who are unlikely to consider using a hoist.

Swimming is promoted by the NHS as an excellent form of exercise for people of all ages, including those who have a pre-existing medical condition or a disability. The installation of a lift at both pools would significantly improve access to swimming for people who have a mobility impairment, injury or disability. Hoddesdon Swimming

Club has an active membership of swimmers with disabilities who would benefit, and fully supports the possible installation of a pool lift. Laura Trott Leisure Centre has adapted changing rooms with changing beds for swimmers who have greater mobility impairments; a pool lift would complement this provision. It is anticipated though that lifts would be most popular with older and less fit residents.

### **The Pool Pod lift**

An online search has identified only one supplier of pool lifts that can safely be used by a swimmer independently, as well as by swimmers who need assistance. Permission is therefore sought for an exception to Contract Standing Orders on the basis that this is specialist equipment only available from a limited number of suppliers.

Pool Pod Products Ltd supplied Pool Pod lifts for the London Paralympics in 2012 that are still in use at the London 2012 Aquatics Centre. The Pool Pod lift is fitted in place to the edge of the pool. When not in use, it does not obstruct the pool, but it can be moved away from poolside for storage if required. To use the lift, the swimmer is given an armband, and either walks into the lift cubicle or wheels in, using the supplied water-compatible wheelchair. The swimmer waves their armband at the sensor to go down into the water. When the swimmer is in the water, they use the poolside sensor to send the lift back up, and again to summon it when they wish to get out. There is also a remote control that enables staff to send the lift up and down for swimmers who need more assistance. Images of the lift are available online at: <https://poolpodproducts.com/> and a film of one in use is available online at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=8&v=6qeDzwc0fHl](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=8&v=6qeDzwc0fHl).

Pool Pods Ltd has done surveys of the John Warner Sports Centre and the Laura Trott Leisure Centre and has identified suitable locations at both pools where the lift could be installed without damaging the fabric or causing an obstruction. John Warner School has been shown the plans and has agreed to the proposed installation at the Sports Centre, which it owns.

### **Financial implications**

Pool Pods Ltd has quoted prices of £28,240.79 for delivery and installation of a Pool Pod pool lift at John Warner Sports Centre, with separate waterproof wheelchair, armbands and remote control unit, trolleys for moving the lift for storage if required, a platform to rest the lift on, and three years' maintenance. For Laura Trott Leisure Centre, where the design of the pool makes installation easier, the quoted price is £26,845.44, and this also includes an additional poolside wheelchair with safety measures designed for swimmers who have a higher level of disability, to complement the changing rooms. The wheelchair incorporates a harness so the swimmer can buckle in, and it has leg rests and movable arms. Therefore, the total price quoted for both sites is £55,086.23.

Pool Pods Ltd is unable to install the pool lifts before June. However, provided the order is submitted by 31 March, there is sufficient commitment in place to spend the grant that the Council can meet the Government deadline.

It is proposed to accept the quoted price from Pool Pods Ltd. This would leave a balance of £12,781.77 from the £67,868 additional DFG grant. It is proposed to spend this balance on the project to add an additional bedroom to the Lawrence House homeless hostel.

If the Pool Pods are installed there is likely to be an ongoing cost to maintain the lifts and wheelchairs after the end of the three-year maintenance contract. This will need to be considered when setting the estimates for the appropriate financial years.

### **Alternative options considered and rejected**

- a) To replace the existing hoists at the leisure centres and return any unused grant to the Government
- b) To install a lift at only one of the two swimming pools, and to return the unused grant
- c) To fund only the extra room at Lawrence House, and to return the unused grant

### **Risk implications**

There is a risk that installation of the pool lifts will not go to plan, causing the pools to be closed for longer than expected, or generating extra costs. This is deemed unlikely as the representatives of the Council and Pool Pods Ltd have thoroughly investigated the construction of both pools on site.

### **Legal implications**

None identified

### **Contribution to the Council's objectives**

The installation of the pool lifts contributes to Council objective 11: *Help residents to have a healthy lifestyle, particularly task 11.1: Support development of physical activities and sports locally, particularly aimed at people who are currently less likely to be physically active and task 11.2: Increase usage of Borough sports facilities, particularly the leisure centres.*

The creation of an extra bedroom at Lawrence House hostel contributes to Council Objective 13: *Help residents affected by homelessness and disadvantage, in particular task 13.2: Prevent homelessness where possible and provide appropriate support to those who are in temporary accommodation, and task 13.4: Maintain a range of funded supported housing for vulnerable local residents with support needs.*

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Contact Officer: Judith Ingham

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Date 19/03/18

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Action reported to the Cabinet on:

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