

Agenda item 8.1

Southwell Town Council

Proposal for discussion by the Governance and Finance Committee

Support for Southwell Leisure Centre

Introduction

Following the stated intention by Newark and Sherwood District Council in May 2024 to withdraw from the Southwell Leisure Centre operating lease, the Southwell Leisure Centre Trust (SLCT) declared its intention to reconfigure its Scheme of Administration to be run by a community-based organisation comprising 10 independent Trustees.

During the Town Council's Meeting in May, an informal request was made for generic funding support of the new organisation.

Funding Options to Support SLCT

The Town Council's Governance and Finance Committee aims to begin the annual budget-setting process during October. Depending on anticipated funding requirements the Council aims to maintain sufficient reserves for between 3 and 12 month's normal expenditure. If there are planned projects that require additional funds, the Council may adopt a council tax precept to cover this. Current UK legislation allows parish and town councils to levy an unlimited precept amount.

The current analysis of the Town Council's reserves means that there is insufficient funding for any additional projects. Therefore, if the Council were to support the Southwell Leisure Centre Trust, the 2025 - 2026 precept would need to be increased to cover this.

Consideration should be given to the fact that the Leisure Centre is used by the residents of Southwell and the surrounding villages. With this in mind, it would be appropriate to open negotiations in good time with the Parish Councils of the surrounding villages to also consider increasing their precept to add their support thereby not placing the entire burden on Southwell Council Tax payers.

Purpose of this Paper

The Governance and Finance Committee is requested to consider the principle of allocating a hypothecated precept to support the Southwell Leisure Centre Trust. This could be a fixed one-off sum to support a capital project or an annual agreement to support running costs.

Martin Stott
Chair of Southwell Town Council
22nd May 2024