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**SKERNE PARK COMMUNITY CENTRE SECURITY IMPROVEMENTS**

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**Children and Young People Portfolio**

**Responsible Director – Murray Rose, Director of Children’s Services**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To formally ask if Cabinet will release £35,500 Community Cashback capital grant to make external improvements to Skerne Park Community Centre.

**Summary**

2. An announcement was made by the Prime Minister on 12 May 2009 that a new £4 million asset recovery community fund was being created for England and Wales. Community Cashback provides a route for returning profits made by criminals to the community for use on local projects which are a priority.
3. Skerne Park Community Centre and Skerne Park was identified as a priority area by the CDRP (Crime Disorder Reduction Partnership) and Connecting with Communities assisted the Community Association in writing a bid.

**Recommendation**

4. It is recommended that Cabinet releases £35,500 capital funding, provided by the Community Cashback scheme.

**Reasons**

5. The recommendation is supported by the following reasons:
  - (a) To tackle youth related Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) incidents
  - (b) To increase community confidence in using the centre
  - (c) To increase community confidence with the justice system.

**Murray Rose, Director of Children’s Services**

**Background Papers**

Information about Community Cashback and the offer letter.

Sue Davison, Principal Community Development Worker Extension 2527

S17 Crime and Disorder	This project will have a big positive impact on Crime and Disorder
Health and Well Being	This project will have a positive impact on health and well-being by making the community centre (sports hall) more accessible.
Sustainability	Community Services have agreed to pick up revenue costs
Diversity	This project will improve access to community centre to vulnerable groups
Wards Affected	Park East
Groups Affected	Skerne Park Community Centre and all the groups who use the centre including Youth Service.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend a change to the Council's budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	No
Urgent Decision	Yes. Grant needs spending this financial year.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	This project will contribute to delivering One Darlington by helping people in Park East access facilities and services.
Efficiency	This project has external funding and an opportunity to bring CCTV to Skerne Park without capital cost to the Council.

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

6. Skerne Park Community Centre applied for community cashback and £35,500 funds have been secured for the following elements:
  - (a) Signage (entrance sign and building sign) - £1,000
  - (b) Entrance improvements (graffiti removal, painting brickwork, wash down steel panels) - £2,000
  - (c) CCTV - c£25,000 depending on option chosen.
  - (d) External lighting - £2,500
  - (e) Professional Fees - £5,000
  - (f) Total - £35,500

Costs were estimated by Building Design Services, Department of Community Services.

7. The Local Criminal Justice Board has instructed that the grant should be managed by the Local Authority.
8. This report is to ask if Cabinet will receive and manage the grant on behalf of the community centre.
9. The project will improve the approach and exterior appearance of Skerne Park Youth & Community Centre. The improvement in the appearance will encourage the community to use the centre, make it more welcoming and busier. We would like the entrance improved, CCTV and lighting to be introduced and introduce signage onto the exterior of the building and better signage to the centre. This will counteract the frequency of vandalism in the area. Vandalism in and around the centre is frequent and has happened for a number of years.
10. Youth related ASB incidents in Park East ward between April 2007 and July 2009 totalled 796. The Park East ward had the highest recorded number of ASB youth related incidents in Darlington (24 wards). The CCTV and lighting will encourage car users to use the sports hall and bring revenue into the centre. We have evidence of sports clubs and other groups ceasing to use the centre because of vandalism to cars. The centre has been described as “badly lit”, “ugly”, “scruffy” and “untidy”. The external appearance puts people off. These comments and feelings are detailed in a report and survey by a Skerne Park young resident. Clear branding of projects using the existing “Payback: Taking the Cash out of Crime” and “Justice Seen, Justice Done” logos will make the benefits to the community more visible. Asset recovery can be an effective tool in building public confidence.
11. Community Services and the CCTV team have been informed and are committed to providing the revenue costs for the CCTV. Graham Putt (CCTV General Manager) estimates the revenue costs to be: £500 service, £150 power, £1000 BT fibre, totalling £1,650 per annum.

## **Conclusion**

12. This is an opportunity to make improvements to Skerne Park Community Centre's appearance and bring CCTV and other security measures to the site through external funding. It is also a chance to improve community confidence in the Criminal Justice System through the Community Cashback labelling and positive publicity.