

Report on	Pitch and Recreational Spaces Strategy
Date of Meeting:	16 th February, 2023
Reporting Officer	Kieran Gordon, Assistant Director Health, Leisure & Wellbeing
Contact Officer	John Howard, Open Spaces & Recreation Development Manager Paul Bailie, Open Spaces & Recreation Development Manager Sean Cavlin, Leisure Services Development Manager

Is this report restricted for confidential business? If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	Yes	
	No	X

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	Previously in February 2021, it was noted to Members that Officers were continuing with work to develop a Mid Ulster District Council Pitch Strategy (which is an action reflective of a recommendation from the previously approved 2018 Sports Facility Strategy).
1.2	A report was brought to Development Committee in May 2021 with information on what the project entails and key milestones to be achieved with a further update to Development Committee in November 2021.
1.3	Various workshops have been arranged for Members during this process - 25th October 2021 and also workshops within each of the 7 DEA's during late August/early September 2022.
1.4	The purpose of this report is to provide information on the proposed plan and indicative budget allocations and to seek Member approval to adopt the proposed Pitch and Recreational Spaces Five Year Strategic Plan.
2.0	Background
2.1	As highlighted previously in May 2021, following a procurement process, Otium Leisure Consultancy were commissioned to undertake the work associated with this strategy development, broken down into a two part study.
2.2	It is envisaged that the final reports enclosed will provide a practical working tool to which Council can refer to alongside the other relevant Council strategies and plans (eg. Playpark Strategy and Outdoor Recreation Strategic Plan) whenever decisions relating to pitch and recreational provision are made in the future and this should reference indicative capital and ongoing annual revenue cost estimates.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	Further information on the process is provided within Appendix A . During this process, the project team have carried out detailed visits and assessments on all Council operated sites relating to association football, bowls, gaelic games, hockey and rugby and have focused on current condition/quality, location, size, usage profile, accessibility and ancillary facilities (ie. changing provision).

3.2

An extensive process of consultation was carried out with individual Council Officers, Council elected members, national governing bodies of sport (NGBs), and sporting clubs. In addition, four public consultation events took place alongside a comprehensive survey being issued.

The strategy should be thought of as an opportunity to promote and develop partnership working in order to deliver pitches and ancillary accommodation as efficiently and cost-effective as possible. At times the Council will be the lead organisation in project development whilst at other times it will have an enabling role.

The Executive Summary, Strategic Recommendations and Costed Actions are enclosed with Appendix B with Table 1.10 noting the specific recommendations, supporting detail, costed plan and proposed profiling of the actions over the 5 year term.

These strategic recommendations and actions are informed by analysis of the research and consultation carried out in the audit of facilities and clubs of the five designated sports, however, they also recognise and consider the significant contribution by the community and education sectors in the provision and operation of sports facilities; the Council owns 22% of all pitches in all ownerships in the district across the five sports and noting that there are approx. 21,000 players in these sports within the club environment across the 5 sports which is approx. 14% of the districts entire population which demonstrates the role and value of sports and recreational participation (figures don't include education participation or informal/non-club participation so the percentage residents within the District engaging in sports/recreational participation could be even higher).

The proposed strategic plan sets out a 5 year plan on a priority basis (with cost estimates) and 28 strategic recommendations are proposed and each strategic recommendation has partnership potential. They have been categorized into 4 areas:

(1) Facility Maintenance (Council-owned assets)

- Pitches and ancillary accommodation must be maintained to ensure they are fit for purpose, able to be used to their full potential and support the development of greater levels of participation.
- Includes refurbishments/extensions to assets

(2) Development (including non-Council assets)

- This category looks at how the Council can work in partnership with clubs and other stakeholder organisations, effectively supporting the delivery of community-based opportunities for participation in sport and physical recreation.
- Includes opportunities for multi-use of facilities including formalised sports and informal recreational use to support community engagement and health and wellbeing
- Includes funding and support opportunities

(3) Facility Development (Council-owned assets)

- Recommendations in this category look to ensure the Council's pitches are high quality and achieve best use of resources to maximise community benefit.
- Includes new provision based on need
- Includes obsolete pitch provision, new identified shared space community need, potential for partnership provision/shared and also opportunities for long term leases

	<p>(4) Staffing Resource</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pro-active management of the strategic plan delivery and sports participation programming will help to ensure efficient use of the pitches and aim to deliver higher levels of participation. <p>3.3 Value of the Strategy This plan sets out a strategic framework for the next five years in order to help reposition our outdoor recreation opportunities across Mid Ulster District Council. It should help improve coordination, collaboration, capacity and the Councils' capability to meet the current and future challenges in a way that maximises opportunities, benefits, investment and resources.</p> <p>The proposed value of the draft strategy totals £9.58M of which 51.1% is to be secured from external sources/funding applications (if available and subject to eligibility criteria) and the remaining 48.9% is proposed to be financed through Council.</p> <p>3.4 Whilst costs are set against the actions, it is emphasised that they are intended as a high level indication of cost based on industry knowledge and experience. In taking forward any of the actions a comprehensive analysis will be carried out prior to each action, not only to estimate costs but also to assess affordability and sustainability as well as the community benefit that will be achieved.</p> <p>3.5 The proposed financial breakdown of the strategy is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MUDC capital expenditure over 5 years: £4,273,792 MUDC revenue expenditure over 5 years: £334,000 External sources/funding applications: £4,980,000 <i>(subject to availability & eligibility criteria)</i> <p>It is proposed that the strategic plan should be reviewed in year three to assess progress and profile the remaining two years where needed. Whilst the plan is sequenced over the 5 years, flexibility will be retained should opportunities for development/funding arise at any point then the sequencing can be re-profiled where necessary.</p>
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	<p>Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications</p> <p>Financial:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MUDC capital expenditure over 5 years: £4,273,792 MUDC revenue expenditure over 5 years: £334,000* External sources/funding applications: £4,980,000 <i>(subject to availability & eligibility criteria)</i> <p>*£334k in Council recurring revenue in total over the 5 year term – £30k is projected for year 1 (April 23-March 24) and it is anticipated that adoption of recommendations to de-classify specific pitches as competitive/training/available for booking along with progressing specific pitches for leasing can yield efficiencies within year 1 and this can be absorbed within existing revenue budgets.</p> <p>Consideration for the additional recurring revenue (<i>approx. £76k additional per year</i>) will need considered as part of the annual estimates process and added into the relevant revenue budgets for 24/25 onwards, as investment in identified pitch enhancements will require a higher quality/frequency of maintenance in order to maintain the investment moving forward.</p>

	<p>Human: A Programme Co-ordinator post has been included, on a temporary basis, for the term of the strategic plan. The role of the Co-ordinator will be to ensure pro-active co-ordination, management and delivery of the strategic plan delivery and sports participation programming. <i>(Costs associated with this post have been included in the overall capitalised cost for the strategy, as outlined above)</i></p> <p>Staff time to appoint and engage with appointment of appropriately qualified and experienced consultancy (ICT) and supply team (IST) where deemed relevant.</p> <p>Risk Management: The strategic plan will be managed and monitored in line with Council's risk management governance procedures.</p>
4.2	<p>Screening & Impact Assessments</p> <p>Equality & Good Relations Implications: Considered in conjunction with Council policies and procedures associated to Equality and Good Relations.</p> <p>Rural Needs Implications: Considered in conjunction with Council policies and procedures associated to rural proofing.</p>
5.0	<p>Recommendation(s)</p>
5.1	<p>Members are asked to note the content of the report and approve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Pitch and Recreational Spaces Five Year Strategic Plan; • Recommending to the Policy & Resources committee that the Pitch & Recreational Strategy 2023 -2028 is included as part of the Council capital programme and the required capital financing allocated (£4,273,792). • Consideration of the additional re-current revenue costs (approx. £76k per annum) as part of the 24/25 rates estimates and beyond.
6.0	<p>Documents Attached & References</p>
6.1	<p>Appendix A: Summary Information on the process to develop the Pitch and Recreational Spaces Five Year Strategic Plan.</p> <p>Appendix B: Pitch and Recreational Spaces Five Year Strategic Plan Part 1; Executive Summary, Strategic Recommendations and Costed Actions</p> <p>Appendix C: Pitch and Recreational Spaces Five Year Strategic Plan Part 2; Audit Report</p>

