



## **BUSINESS CASE FOR: -**

**Railway Park 3G**

## **Department: -**

**Leisure and Outdoor Recreation**

## **Date: -**

**April 2021**

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# **Business Case**

## **1. Executive Summary**

Council previously approved a concept development at Railway Park and an indicative budget of £1 million within the Capital programme to deliver on the project. This did not include a 3G pitch.

Within the previously approved Railway Park design, there was a large green open space planned within the development. This Business Case concept has been prepared following a request received via the DEA working group of the proposed Railway Park development to consider the addition of a 3G pitch within the previously approved Railway Park development and for the potential of this large green open space to be developed into a 3G pitch. This proposed addition of a 3G pitch as an additional feature on the large green open space may mean the Council may not have to source (and potentially purchase) land elsewhere within the Dungannon area to develop a 3G pitch.

The focus of the appraisal is a proposal by Council to invest in the development of multi-sport pitch and community provision in Railway Park, Dungannon.

The context for examining options is the Mid Ulster District Council Sports Facility Strategy 2018.

The Business Case concept has been developed on the basis of an engagement process resourced by the Council. The engagement process set out to establish, at a local level, if need and demand existed through engagement with groups and sports clubs in the Dungannon area and wider community stakeholders.

Council approved the Sports Facility Strategy in May 2018 which provided a framework for the future prioritisation, development and provision of sports facilities at a local level in order to meet identified community need, helping to increase participation, addressing health inequalities, and other local specific factors.

Through local engagement with various stakeholders, the development of a 3G facility at Railway Park will seek to provide effective partnerships with the private, education, public/local community and voluntary sector organisations which could bring benefits to the Dungannon area and wider District in a way that is open and accessible to all while at the same time maximises sustainability, efficiency and community benefit.

It is recognised that a shared, strategic approach to open space maximises its potential to contribute to a more inclusive and sustainable future.

As referenced in the 2018 Mid Ulster District Council Sports Facility Strategy, it is the quality of existing pitch provision, as opposed to quantity that is the real issue. Many grass pitches do not drain well and therefore can be unplayable for several months. The provision of good quality synthetic pitches for training is therefore important.

The development of a 3G facility at Railway Park could be used to further develop the pitch

infrastructure in the District in a way that is affordable, sustainably, inclusive, high quality and consistent with current best practice in public pitch provision.

Sixteen strategic approaches – national, regional, local – are reviewed, reflecting the broad reach of this project. The review demonstrates that the project fits well with a wide range of strategic approaches. It has the potential to deliver a wide range of outcomes which will benefit people of all ages and abilities whatever their aspirations relating to active lifestyles and wellbeing might be.

The development of a 3G facility at Railway Park allows for a cross Council approach to use of leisure pitches and recreational space with Leisure Services, Parks, Health and Wellbeing, Community and Good Relations to ensure they are shared and maximised community assets.

## **2. Introduction & Overview**

Give a brief description of the proposal including the key objectives.

Mid Ulster District Council covers an area of 1714 km<sup>2</sup> and is the seventh largest of the eleven councils. According to NISRA – Mid-Year Estimate 2019, current population is 148,528 and the district has the fastest population growth in Northern Ireland, increasing by 18.4% from 2002 to 2018, compared with all the other Council areas and the Northern Ireland average of 10.3%. The population is projected to be 173,400 by 2037. Mid Ulster District Council is ranked 8th out of 11 district councils in terms of Multiple Deprivation indices.

Mid Ulster is home to more under 16's and fewer over 65's than the Northern Ireland average. A third of the population is based in and around the principal urban centres of Cookstown, Dungannon and Magherafelt and two smaller towns, Coalisland and Maghera. Only 56% of the population meets recommended physical activity levels of at least 150 minutes per week (2012 figures). Rates of adult and childhood obesity are increasing according to the most recent Northern Ireland Health Survey results.

Growing obesity levels suggest there is a need to facilitate increased participation, and to ensure availability of quality sports facilities, which are both affordable and accessible to the local community. It will be important to ensure that communities have equal access to sports and leisure facilities to ensure that levels of obesity do not continue to show significant increases.

As the population continues to grow, demand for access to quality sports facilities will increase. The opening of facilities on education sites to create a greater level of public access could facilitate increased levels of participation in sport and physical activity, which could contribute to reducing health inequalities.

The project here proposed is important in that the intention through sports development planning and the addition of the 3G facility is to encourage more participation in sport and physical recreation.

Within the previously approved Railway Park design, there was a large green open space planned within the development. For the purposes of this business case, it is necessary to factor in an opportunity cost, that is, the value of the site in question. As Council own this site, therefore to add a 3G as an additional feature on the large green open space means the Council may not have to source (and purchase) land elsewhere within the Dungannon area to develop a

3G pitch – potentially at cost.

As referenced in the Mid Ulster District Council Sports Facility Strategy 2018, to meet Sport Northern Ireland Sports Facility Hub priorities, it would be appropriate to support clubs and sports that will work together in the future e.g. GAA, Soccer and Rugby clubs with all teams using 1 x 3G pitch (up to 42 teams – the optimum number of teams per pitch as set out by the English Football Association in their new 3G Rubber Crumb Pitch strategy (not clubs within the area but teams that would have access to the pitch for training and competition).

Provision of additional 3G pitches would help to address accessibility issues for GAA, football and rugby, because existing grass pitches cannot always be used by everyone simply because many are of insufficient quality to meet demand, and some are on education sites where there is no access, and/or the pitches do not have floodlighting.

### 3. Market analysis/Strategies?

Identify aspects of the Organisational Strategy.

At this stage of any proposed investment project it's important to consider its potential to complement and contribute to national, regional and local strategic approaches, should it proceed. Government and its agencies recognise the important role that community activity, sport and physical recreation can play in the development of people and the communities in which they live. This section looks at a range of national, regional and local strategic approaches that have a relevance to the proposed project and considers how the project might contribute to their objectives.

This proposed 3G development at Railway Park is about developing people by encouraging active lifestyles through the provision of facilities. The Mid Ulster District Council Sports Facility Strategy 2018 audit evidences the Council's role in the provision of sports pitches and recreational spaces across the District therefore in the development of opportunities for active and healthier lifestyles. This proposed development comes at a time when an active lifestyle is recognised as vitally important in helping to reduce the incidence of a range of life-limiting diseases. It also makes significant contributions to at least two of the five Council strategic themes in its Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024:

- Theme 2: Service Delivery
- Theme 5; Communities

This proposed development should take cognizance of current Strategic plans:

- Mid Ulster District Council Corporate Plan 2020-2024
- Community Plan for Mid Ulster District Council 2017 “Our Community Plan, 10 year plan for Mid Ulster” – promoting healthy and active lifestyles, helping address mental health, health inequalities and greater community development engagement.
- Mid Ulster District Council Local Development Plan 2030
- Mid Ulster District Council Sports Facility Strategy 2018
- Mid Ulster District Council Open Space, Recreation and Leisure 2015
- Mid Ulster District Council Public Parks and Play Five Year Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025

- Mid Ulster District Council Sports Club Survey 2019
- The Northern Ireland Strategy for Sport & Physical Recreation 2009-2019 'Sport Matters'
- Sport Northern Ireland Corporate Plan 2015-2020
- Northern Ireland Executive: Active Ageing Strategy 2016-2021
- Active Living: No Limits 2016-2021
- Sport NI Wellbeing in Sport Action Plan 2019-2025
- Active Places Research Report (Bridging the Gap) 2009
- Active Places Research Report 2014 Update, Bridging the Gap
- Draft Programme for Government 2016 – 2021; NI Executive
- Together: Building a United Community (T:BUC); NI Executive

Taken together these strategies and their outcomes have been influenced by and reflect other strategies and policies. Not least of these is the draft 'Programme for Government' whose strategic outcomes address, amongst other things, the attainment of good health and confident and peaceful communities, targeting 'those things that make real improvements to the quality of life for the citizen'.

### **'Sport Matters: The NI Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation 2009-2019'; Department for Communities/ Sport NI**

The strategy sets out a shared vision of 'a culture of lifelong enjoyment and success in sport. The case is made for ongoing investment in sport and physical recreation to 'deliver a range of sporting outcomes and support the wider social agenda in areas such as education health, the economy and the development of communities over the period 2009-2019.' Investment is directed towards three key areas:

(1) Participation (2) Performance and (3) Places

As with the community planning process a number of key principles underpin the strategy's development that could easily be applied to this project:

- Empowering individuals, groups and communities;
- Responding to need;
- Partnership working based on consultation and stakeholder buy-in;
- Promoting good relations and working towards 'A Shared Future'; and
- Focusing on outcomes.

The strategy highlights the importance of joined-up planning and partnership working at strategic levels as well as within delivery structures, adding that the pooling of resources, public and private is critical to achieving delivery.

Given the challenges posed variously by the economic downturn and local government reform since the strategy was published the targets for 'Places' have not been delivered in full.

However, one target is highly relevant to this project, that is:

*PL25: 'By 2019 to ensure that 90% of the population have quality accredited multi sports facilities that have the capacity to meet demand, within 20 minutes travel time.'*

The clarity of this target helps to inform the preparation of the Council's position for considered proposed developments such as that presented by this business case with relation to Railway Park, Dungannon.

### **Mid Ulster District Council Sports Facility Strategy 2018**

The Mid Ulster District Council Sports Facility Strategy 2018 provides a framework to inform the priority for the development and provision of sports facilities at a local level, to meet identified community need in Mid Ulster. The strategy rationale is to develop a framework for future prioritisation and development of sports facilities based on identified need, increasing participation, addressing health inequalities and other local specific factors.

The focus of the 2018 strategy was facilities analysis on sports halls (4 courts or above – except those on education sites), pools of 20m length and above, health and fitness suites of 20 stations and above, Multi Use Games Areas (MUGA's), and full size Artificial Grass Pitches (AGP's).

This was one of 11 Local Strategies that were developed in the context of the wider NI Sports Facility Strategy.

The consultation process for this Strategy identified a number of key issues and priorities that relates to this proposed 3G development at Railway Park:

- *Some existing facilities are unavailable for community access because they are on education sites. This impacts particularly on the supply of accessible sports hall, pitch facilities, although there are some existing good examples of facilities shared between the community and a school e.g. Fivemiletown College, Aughnacloy High School.*
- *Based on club feedback there is a lack of all-weather pitches/3Gs, particularly for training. New provision should be considered/supported where it would replace poorer quality grass pitches and can be shared between a number of local clubs/organisations.*
- *Development of additional 3G pitches; the priority is for those based on education sites which offer community use and the opportunity for multi-facility hub development. There is a need for additional club –based provision but again this should be shared between clubs as a minimum to ensure sustainability and provide the opportunity for multi-facility hubs.*
- *Investment to improve existing AGPs/3G pitches e.g. floodlights, fencing, surfaces, infrastructure such as changing rooms, storage*

The consultation process for the 2018 strategy identified that several local stakeholders felt there is a need for additional pitches within Mid Ulster District Council. The feedback on pitch provision, current and future, represents the majority of comments received. The consultation feedback identified the following:

- *There is a need for an additional grass rugby pitch, ideally this would be on a club site, but access to a pitch for competition games could be off site; the growth in the numbers*

*of young players means more teams are playing more often, and existing pitch facilities do not have the capacity*

- There is a need for additional synthetic training pitch facilities for rugby given the number of teams now in the club and the condition of existing grass pitches,*
- Upgraded existing 3G pitch to complement existing sports and social facilities*
- Development of floodlit synthetic surfaces provision for training*
- 3G pitches for local clubs*

The strategy makes a number of recommendation to address the issues and priorities identified and provides a framework within which to develop sports facilities in Mid Ulster and many of these outcomes support the proposed 3G development at Railway Park.

### **Bridging the Gap – Active Places Research 2009**

Bridging the Gap – Active Places Research 2009, and its subsequent update in 2014, have also informed the Mid Ulster District Council Sports Facility Strategy 2018.

The 2009, 'Bridging the Gap' Active Places research report, produced by Sport NI (SNI), assessed the adequacy of existing sports facility provision (excluding education facilities), in Northern Ireland's 26 former and 11 proposed district council areas by comparison with National Facility Standards and/or the facility demand of potential users (determined by the Facilities Planning Model (FPM)).

'Bridging the Gap' established three general findings:

1. There is a significant shortfall in sports facility provision in Northern Ireland
2. The deficit in provision is not uniform
3. There are a number of areas for concern regarding provision, particularly in relation to quality, quantity, accessibility, condition, universal access and specification.

Although 'Bridging the Gap 2009' identified significant need for sports facilities throughout Northern Ireland, the research stopped short of identifying where new or refurbished sports facility provision should be developed or located. The Programme for Government, Together Building a United Community, the Corporate Plan of the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL), Sport Matters and SNI's Corporate Plan identify a number of Government priorities that set the direction for investment in sport and physical recreation, because sport contributes to a range of wider social, economic and cultural needs.

Sport improves community health and well-being and can contribute to reducing inequalities in child poverty and social deprivation, as well as ensuring equality of opportunity.

The 2014 Update to Bridging the Gap re-calculated need for a number of specific facility types, to illustrate progress in developing the sports facility infrastructure in NI; the analysis still



identifies a significant shortfall in provision, however, particularly in terms of playing pitches.

Sport NI completed a 2014 update of figures quantifying all pitches in the 11 District Council Areas. They produced two tables covering Playing Pitches - Including education synthetic but excluding education grass pitches (Table below), which shows an assessment including both education synthetic and grass pitches.

DISTRICT COUNCIL	2011 POPULATION PROJECTION	PERCEIVED ACRES SHORTFALL (SNI STANDARD)	PITCHES REQUIRED I.E. SHORTFALL
COOKSTOWN	35,238	-4	-2
DUNGANNON	50,995	6	2
MAGHERAFELT	43,682	-17	-7
TOTAL			-7

Table 4.11 All Sites- Including Education synthetic and including Education Grass Pitches

DISTRICT COUNCIL	2011 POPULATION PROJECTION	PERCEIVED ACRES SHORTFALL (SNI STANDARD)	PITCHES REQUIRED
COOKSTOWN	35,238	-30	-12
DUNGANNON	50,995	-48	-19
MAGHERAFELT	43,682	-76	-31
TOTAL			-62

Source: Sports NI- 2014 update of the Active Places Research Report

Taking into account that efficiency can be achieved through the use of synthetic pitches Sport NI calculated Mid Ulster's pitch provision on 3 acres (1.2hectares) per 1000 population rather than the old grass pitch NFPA target.

- From the above table, it can be seen that Magherafelt is best provided for in terms of pitches and actually has a large surplus of pitches.
- Cookstown has no pitch deficiency.
- Dungannon has a shortfall of 2 pitches when educational grass pitches are not included but doesn't have a shortfall when educational grass pitches are included – however there are known challenges associated with the “opening up” of educational sites for community access.

The Sport NI 2009 updated Bridging the Gap assessment identifies a need in Mid Ulster for additional pitches (grass and all weather).

### **Local Development Plan**

The Council has prepared a Local Development Plan 2030 (LDP) and a Preferred Options Paper (POP) has been consulted on prior to the formal preparation of the LDP.

The Council has also developed a position paper of Open Space, Sport and Recreation.

The POP was prepared to consider issues that may have a direct impact on the district and set out possible options to address them as well as the councils preferred option. In the context of Open Space, Recreation and Leisure the POP concludes that there is no immediate need to address pitch provision and therefore Development Plan intervention is not considered necessary in relation to the zoning of land at this time.

The Draft Plan Strategy sets out the Council's vision for planning the use of land and details the objectives, planning framework and planning policies that will be used to deliver the vision.

Responsibility for planning passed to the Council in April 2015 as a result of Local Government Reform and the Draft Plan Strategy is the first strategic approach to local development under the Council. The Draft Plan Strategy recognises it is set in the context of the Executive's Programme for Government commitments and priorities as well as the Regional Development Strategy 2035, the latter being the overarching spatial planning strategy for Northern Ireland.

Open Space, Recreation and Leisure' is one of five social policies whose objective is accommodating growth and creating places. The policy explains that applications under sub-policy 'Policy OS1 – Protection of Open Space' will be informed by the following policy statement:-

*'Development that results in the loss of open space shall not accord with the Plan irrespective of its physical condition and appearance.'*

*An exception can be made where it is demonstrated that it will bring substantial community benefits that outweigh the loss of the open space and it will have no significant detrimental impact on open space provision, amenity, character or biodiversity of an area.*

*Where appropriate, adequate compensatory measures to include provision for more intensive recreational use (3G sports pitches) on site or in other locations capable of serving the area will be given consideration. Compensatory measures should be comparable to that which is lost.'*

Benefits to the community include:-

*'More intensive recreation facilities such as all-weather pitches.'*

In Northern Ireland, the Department of the Environment recognises the need for provision of outdoor recreation space in Planning Policy Statement 8: Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation. Section 5.15 states:

- *"In large developments there may be a need to provide more formal outdoor recreation facilities such as playing pitches to meet the needs generated by the development. In such cases the Department will consult closely with the recreation department of local district Councils."*

It therefore could be argued that the development of a 3G at Railway Park can assist with the strategic development of opportunities for increased participation in sport.

Planning policy is however necessary to ensure provision and protection of open space and also to ensure sports and recreation facilities coming forward are appropriately sited.

The Council's LDP Strategy for the retention, creation and promotion of Open Space, Recreation and Leisure is as follows:

- Provide policy for the protection and safeguarding of public open space;
- Require the provision of open space in housing developments and where appropriate equip it for children's play;
- Facilitate large scale leisure on opportunity sites within or near town centers and smaller scale elsewhere within settlement limit;
- Protect environmental open spaces for example parks, gardens and linear open spaces

such as pedestrian and cycle routes/walkways and river corridors that have open space value;

- Local Policies Plan designate important open spaces to be protected, zone new sites and offer protection through other means such as Local Landscape Policy Areas.

Source: Position Paper Seven Open Space, Recreation and Leisure 2 June 2015

### **Together: Building a United Community (T:BUC)**

T:BUC outlines a vision of:

*'a united community, based on equality of opportunity, the desirability of good relations and reconciliation – one which is strengthened by its diversity, where cultural expression is celebrated and embraced and where everyone can live, learn, work and socialise together, free from prejudice, hate and intolerance.'*

The strategy reflects the Executive's commitment to improving community relations and continuing the journey towards a more united and shared society. This strategy represents a major change in the way that good relations will be delivered across government. Departments will be expected to work together to ensure that outcomes are delivered on the ground. This will mean that funding is directed in the most appropriate manner through the most appropriate bodies on the basis of themes in this strategy.

The priorities of this strategy are:-

1. Children and Young People;
2. Shared Community;
3. Safe Community; and
4. Cultural Expression and socialise together, free from prejudice, hate and intolerance.'

District Councils in Northern Ireland have a statutory duty under the Recreation and Youth Service (NI) Order 1986(5) to 'secure the provision for its area of adequate facilities for recreational, social, physical and cultural activities. Generally speaking, the outworking of this legislation has been Council provision and operation of leisure centres and sports facilities and the preparation and delivery of activity programmes. The legislation doesn't specify the meaning of 'adequate' so over the years (the original 1973 Order started the development of leisure and recreation centres) each local authority developed facilities in accordance with their perception of need; for example, all of the former 26 local authorities developed at least one leisure centre with a swimming pool (Moyle District Council excepted). Sport NI's work in reports such as 'Active Places Research Report 2009; Bridging the Gap' was critical in beginning to assess the actual need for sports facilities based on existing provision matched to population. The 'Bridging the Gap' report, even by its very title concludes there is a shortfall in sports facilities that are 'community accessible'. Whilst local authorities are by far the biggest provider of community accessible facilities, schools are increasingly opening their sports facilities for shared use, so the picture of adequacy of provision is constantly changing.

## **4. Links to Council Policy/Strategic Context**

Identify aspects of the Divisional/Unit Plan that are addressed.

### **Mid Ulster Community Plan 2017-2027; Mid Ulster District Council**

The Council's vision for Community Planning reflects the plan's 5 themes, three of which have a particular resonance with the proposed 3G development at Railway Park:-



The community in Mid Ulster, and more specifically the wider Dungannon area, is at the very heart of this proposed 3G development at Railway Park.

It could be argued that increased participation will follow by implementing this proposed 3G facility development and this will contribute to the Community Plan's health and wellbeing theme. It could be argues that local sports clubs will be able to grow their membership – the lack of a local floodlit all weather synthetic training facilities is a constraint on membership – and more volunteers will be needed to assist in servicing the growing clubs.

The strategic context for reviewing the adequacy of provision of pitches is quite simply to provide better quality facilities for a better quality experience, so encouraging more participation for all, including those in formalised sports and those not in formalised sports..

The particular challenge is to make best use of resources and to do so through partnerships that can deliver more by working together than working in isolation.

Mid Ulster District Council's vision within the Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024 reflects this:

- *To be at the heart of our community.*

This proposed 3G development at Railway Park is about developing people by encouraging active lifestyles through the provision of facilities.

The Mid Ulster District Council Sports Facility Strategy 2018 audit evidences the Council's role in the provision of sports pitches and recreation space therefore in the development of opportunities for active and healthier lifestyles. This proposed development comes at a time when an active lifestyle is recognised as vitally important in helping to reduce the incidence of a range of life-limiting diseases. It also makes significant contributions to at least two of the five Council strategic themes in its Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024:

- Theme 2: Service Delivery
- Theme 5: Communities

Whilst the project here proposed clearly fits with delivery, it is first and foremost about people, in that it will create opportunities for active recreation that bring people and groups together, facilitating individuals' growth and the development of communities with positive outcomes for people's health and wellbeing. In providing and enhancing the quality of sports facilities the Council is effectively a community encourager.

The Recreation and Youth Service (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 states that "Each district council shall secure the provision for its area of adequate facilities for recreational, social, physical and cultural activities and for that purpose may, either alone or together with another district council or any other person, establish, maintain and manage any such facilities". Furthermore, the Order 1986 goes on to state that "a district council shall, in carrying out its functions, have regard to the facilities provided by other district councils or by other persons. A district council may provide a facility for the whole of Northern Ireland or for an area or areas outside its own area".

## 5. Assessment of Benefits/Need

What are the opportunities and benefits for the Organisation and User(s)?

This proposed development comes at a time when an active lifestyle is recognised as vitally important in helping to reduce the incidence of a range of life-limiting diseases. It also makes significant contributions to at least two of the five Council strategic themes in its Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024:

- Theme 2: Service Delivery
- Theme 5: Communities

In addition, linked to Mid Ulster District Council's Corporate Plan 2020 – 2025, while each of the strategic themes has a clear focus and purpose, there are also a number of corporate commitments which are not tethered to one area of work, but are common to all and will be realised via this proposed strategy:

- Promoting Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations
  - *"Beyond a duty of compliance with our equality scheme, we aim to mainstream the promotion of Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations throughout the organisation, actively seeking out ways in which to enhance those opportunities and to build positive relations between and among the diverse communities across Mid Ulster."*
  - *Working in partnership our Good Relations and Community Development Teams to further promote shared spaces across Mid Ulster in all our towns and*

*villages to seek to bring people together and maximise resources.*

- Continuously improving our services
  - *“Whether through our formal Corporate Improvement Objectives and service-specific Performance Improvement Plans or the small, regular, routine changes which we make to services through feedback, we are committed to continuously improving what we do and how we do it.”*
  - *Working in partnership with our outreach sports and leisure teams, Health and Wellbeing teams to promote active and health lifestyles for all.*
- Designing and delivering our services sustainably
  - *“From large-scale investment projects to new or changing service models, we place a value on ensuring that what we do not only meets current needs, but is designed and delivered to be sustainable in the longer-term, ensuring the needs of future generations are uncompromised.”*
- Working collaboratively across the public, private, community and voluntary sector to achieve shared objectives
  - *“Collaborative working is key to delivering successful outcomes for local people. The Council is committed to embracing the opportunities to work with a range of other organisations on issues, projects and plans as they relate to every theme, priority and aspect of our work.”*

Providing services across a significant section of the southern part of the Mid Ulster District Council area, the formerly named Dungannon & South Tyrone has a population of 57,852 a rise of over 10,000 between 2001 and 2011 equating to a 21.2% increase. The projected population of the area is expected to be 68,911 by 2022 representing a further growth in the population.

Dungannon is the main urban centre within the district with other settlements with a population over 1,000 being Coalisland (now falls under Torrent, with some of the former Cookstown areas), Moy and Fivemiletown.

Reflecting on the local economy and employment within the area an increase from 60% to 67.5% in economic activity rates took place between 2001 and 2011. Of those economically active and employed many work in agriculture, manufacturing and construction with the latter accounting for 10% of the labour market. The public sector provides employment for 26% of those employed. There is also a comparatively high proportion of the labour force in occupations linked to skilled trades, not dissimilar to Magherafelt and Cookstown Districts.

Dungannon as the highest growth town across the area – overall Mid Ulster is over 20% and NI average is around 7-8%, it could be argued that Dungannon is major driver of this.

Railway Park falls within the Ballysaggart ward. Railway Park also borders the wards and Super Output areas of Ballysaggart, Mullaghmore, Drumglass and Killymeal.

The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2010, highlighted that the Ballysaggart Ward is one of the most deprived wards in Northern Ireland, falling within the top 15%. Part of the

ward has been identified as an area of targeted need and is placed within the Neighbourhood Renewal Area of Dungannon West. Drumglass and Mullaghmore also have issues of deprivation, falling within the top 20-25% most disadvantaged wards across Northern Ireland.

During the past 10 years the Ballysaggart ward has grown by over 34% to a population of 2661, resulting in unprecedented building growth making it one of the highest urban density areas in the District at 7.8 density. Approximately 75% of the ward's residents live in social housing. It is one of the areas that has benefited most from inward migration.

Living environment, alongside crime and disorder are the most concerning regarding deprivation ranking as they are in the top 10% of most disadvantaged in the region.

The area is also in the top 15% most deprived wards across Northern Ireland related to income and health. There are specific issues in the area relating to healthy lifestyle diseases, lung and heart and diabetes which contribute to the death rate in the area being up to 7-10 years younger than other areas in the Council areas and across Northern Ireland. The average age at death is 73 years compared to 80 years for Northern Ireland.

Specifically related to children, the birth rate for this area is one of the highest in the Borough and NI region. Births to parents with medium/low or unknown social class in 2006 was 54.6% compared to 47.7% for the Northern Ireland average. It is anticipated this figure will have changed dramatically and will be much higher given the significant change in unemployment figures from 2006 – 2008.

Poverty is extremely high in this area for both working and unemployed households. Houses in relative poverty in the Ballysaggart Super Output Area according to NISRA is 40%, therefore almost every 1 in every 2 homes is in poverty.

Child poverty is also a major issue for the Ballysaggart area contributed to by low wages and high housing rents. Many children in the area are not registered with a dentist, have a poor diet and do not receive adequate exercise, all of which have implications for longer-term health and life expectancy.

23% of those living in the Ballysaggart ward and Dungannon overall, are young people which is higher than the Northern Ireland average.

Education, skills, training is also in the top 15% in relation to deprivation, where many children are performing up to 10% less compared to their counterparts 2-3 miles away particularly in the key skills of Maths and English.

It is recognised, that good quality open/green space can help address issues of poverty, health, education and social interaction and therefore significantly enhance the lives of those who live in the area. Developing Railway Park further with the addition of a 3G pitch could be argued as having great potential in being a key contributor to addressing the issues noted above for this area including children in poverty, elderly people, disengaged young people, migrants and people experiencing issues of disadvantage.

The addition of a 3G pitch could directly impact on the lives of people on health physical and

mental wellbeing, education, social interaction and pride in their community place. Alongside greater access to other communities and facilities there will be opportunities for both social and economic improvements.

### **Community/Sporting Group Survey**

The purpose of this survey was to explain the potential for addition of a 3G facility to the Railway Park development, explore attitudes towards this and attempt to find out what indicative use may be if the facility was constructed. As part of the engagement process with local community/sporting groups, information was requested on potential use if the facility were to be constructed.

The following clubs/groups were asked for feedback:

- Dungannon Swifts FC
- Dungannon Utd Youth
- Dungannon Clarkes GAA
- Dungannon Eoghan Rua GAC
- Dungannon Rugby
- Dungannon Tigers FC
- Dungannon Ladies Hickey Club
- Naomh Treasa Camogie Club
- Aodh Ruadh LGFC
- West End Hibs FC
- AFC Dungannon
- Dungannon Rovers FC
- Reclain Rovers FC
- Caledon Rovers FC
- Mid Ulster Youth FC

Engagement focused on the following themes:

- Number of adult and under age teams
- Normal location for club outdoor activities (ie. club owned, hire of other pitches,etc)
- If a synthetic pitch were to be located at Railway Park, anticipation that their club would make use of this proposed 3G development at Railway Park, how and what would be their specific need of use (ie. Alleviate grass pitch congestion / usage / increase numbers of adult/junior teams
- Predication of potential usage if a 3G pitch were to be located at Railway Park
- Prediction of anticipated hours per week? (eg. daytime / evening / weekend / Spring / Summer / Autumn / Winter)
- Analysis of bookings at other nearby Council facilities – ie. Drumcoo
- Understanding if a 3G facility were to be developed at Railway Park and if they currently use Drumcoo, would they still require to use Drumcoo also and how



## Summary

- Available space and the limitations of grass pitches in the Dungannon area tended to be included with all who responded – particularly weather issues and over reliance on grass pitches and unpredictability of availability for grass pitches that could result in planned activities being cancelled/postponed
- Indication of use amongst all who responded tended to range from a prediction of 2-3 hours per week to 12 hours per week
- Indication from some clubs that this proposed facility development would help them with aspiration of development of new activities and possible new youth teams being established.
- All who responded indicated it was to alleviate pitch congestion and primarily would be used for training.
- All who responded indicated continued use of both Drumcoo and any Railway Park facility

Analysis was also undertaken with primary and post primary schools that have a travel time to Dungannon less than 15 mins. Information was gathered to determine if a school already had a 3G facility on site and if it was open for public hire.

- 48 Primary Schools were contacted 31 replied = 65% response rate
- 10 Post Primary Schools were contacted 8 replied = 80% response rate
- Out of the 58 Schools across the Dungannon area, 12 schools have a 3G facility onsite = 21%
- Not all are open for public hire
- Out of the 31 Primary Schools that replied, only 3 meet the criteria of - 15m drive time, 3G onsite and open for public hire
- Out of the 10 Post Primary Schools that replied, only 2 meet the criteria of - 15m drive time, 3G onsite and open for public hire

The above tends to be reflective of the analysis within the following papers:

The Bridging the Gap – Active Places Research 2009, and its subsequent update in 2014, along with the Mid Ulster District Council Sports Facility Strategy 2018 evidence that there is a need in Mid Ulster for additional pitches (grass and all weather) and that the Dungannon area has a shortfall of pitches.

## **Mid Ulster District Council Participation Team**

Council has committed to the work of sports development over many years; the recent departmental re-structuring reflects this ongoing commitment in the creation of the post of Participation Manager. The postholder, based at MUSA (with flexibility to work across other leisure facility sites) has the following three purposes/functions:-

- To develop, deliver and achieve strategically focused sport, leisure activity and participation programmes across the District.
- To increase participation rates in physical activity and improve health & wellbeing within the community.
- To assist in the development and implementation of policy and strategic relationships within Council and other partners to increase participation and overall health and wellbeing.

The Participation Manager's job description evidences the Council's focus on getting more people involved in sport and leisure activity to improve health and wellbeing. This is very much in line with the project aim and objectives through implementation of a future participation development plan should the 3G facility at Railway Park proceed.

## **6. Implications of not undertaking Proposal**

What problems will arise if the proposal does not go ahead?

Railway Park concept/enhancement as previously approved and included within the Council capital programme would remain the same as it currently is without any 3G pitch addition/investment.

By not taking forward this proposal, it supports a status quo decision, which does not allow for maximising Council's current recreational assets for the wider benefit of all within the Dungannon area.

By not taking forward this proposed development, then this would not seek to target the analysis with the following papers:

- The Bridging the Gap – Active Places Research 2009, and its subsequent update in 2014, along with the Mid Ulster District Council Sports Facility Strategy 2018 evidence that there is a need in Mid Ulster for additional pitches (grass and all weather) and that the Dungannon area has a shortfall of pitches.

## **7. Alternatives/Describe the options available**

What are the alternatives/options to undertaking the proposed development?

Council currently have a 3G facility at Drumcoo (approx. less than 10 mins drive). The nearest Council owned 3G's to this proposed development is Benburb (approx. 15 mins drive), Mid Ulster Sports Arena (approx. 20 mins drive), Aughnacloy (approx. 20 mins drive). Funding dependant, they may also be a future development of a 3G at Gortgonis (approx. 15 min drive).

### **Potential for Displacement**

The potential for this proposed addition of a 3G at Railway Park to detract from other facilities (i.e., people/groups cease using other facilities in favour of the new facility) could be argued that it is low risk.

There are two elements of displacement to consider:

- (i) Displacement from other sports clubs in the area
- (ii) Displacement from similar facilities in the area

Considering the first element above, the proposed 3G facility at Railway Park is an enhancement of existing facilities that is planned for the Railway Park Development. Additionally it has the potential to be used for sports training and recreational play by a number of sports clubs and groups from the surrounding areas and beyond. There is a long history of sports club participation in the locality of Dungannon with well-established memberships that are

invariably clearly defined according to home location. The proposed 3G development at Railway Park is therefore not expected to cause movement of membership between clubs but rather allow for growth of each of the resident/anchor clubs with access to an additional facility.

Considering the second element above, whilst Drumcoo Playing Fields has a 3G facility and is approx less than 10 mins drive, engagement and feedback with local clubs/groups suggest that they will still need to use Drumcoo as the proposed development at Railway Park will be for the purposes of training and recreation as it wont be sufficient size for competitive matchplay therefore Drumcoo still has an important role to play. Additionally, when Bridging the Gap – Active Places Research 2009, and its subsequent update in 2014, along with the Mid Ulster District Council Sports Facility Strategy 2018 are taken into consideration, it was evidenced that there is a need in Mid Ulster for additional pitches (grass and all weather) and that the Dungannon area has a shortfall of pitches.

## 8. Organisational Areas Affected

What staff, processes and systems will be affected by the proposed development?

- Staff engagement and facilitation of stakeholder engagement – can be derived via existing resources
- Infrastructure/databases/communication capabilities – can be derived via existing resources
- Working group, across departments, to ensure an integrated approach to deliver to meet the wider corporate targets for leisure and sport, health and wellbeing, community development, good relations

## 9. Risks

What risks are involved in implementing the proposal and how will they be managed?

- Project funding risks.
- Lack of clarity of roles/ responsibilities for the project.
- Failure to deliver address identified needs and deliver project objectives
- Low levels of stakeholder engagement to the consultation
- Stakeholder resistance to proposed development

## 10. Investment Costs

What is the summary of capital investment costs for the proposed development?

### a) Staff

- Staff estimated at 1 x attendant at 30 hrs per week (5 x hrs per days x 6 days to facilitate bookings, ongoing inspection requirements, etc) – approx. £22.5k per annum

### b) Training

- N/A

### c) Equipment, etc

- N/A

#### **d) Other**

- Indicative capital investment estimate would be up to £500,000. (excluding fees)
- Recurring annual revenue expenditure – total approx. £3775 inclusive of electricity approx. £2k per annum, maintenance approx. £1775 per annum (ie. Weekly Brush/Rake @ approx. £800 (48 weeks/ in-house), annual deep clean @ approx. £500, every two years 1-2 ton of rubber in-fill @ approx. £175 per annum. Carpet repairs @ approx. £300 per annum)

#### **TOTAL**

- Indicative capital costs estimates would be up to £500,000. (excluding fees)
- Indicative recurring annual revenue expenditure costs estimates would be approx. £26,275 (per annum – inclusive of above indicative staffing and maintenance costs)
- Indicative costs for replacement carpet after approx. 10 years – approx. £200k

### **11. Running Costs**

What are the costs to run this proposal as a service/system?

The above would be presented as indicative costs and subject to consideration and approval by Members and included within the Council's Capital Framework therefore at this stage indicative costs won't be completely established until a procurement process is carried out.

A 3G rubber crumb pitch carpet lasts approximately 10 years before it will require replacing. To ensure sustainability of providing 3G rubber crumb pitches, a business and sports development plan for the pitch should be produced. A new replacement carpet can cost up to £200,000

### **12. Payback/NPV (Net Present Value)**

How and on what timescales will the projected costs be recouped as savings or benefits?

Whilst there would not be an immediate payback on the initial outlay of the investment for the strategy developed, it is anticipated that this proposed development comes at a time when an active lifestyle is recognised as vitally important in helping to reduce the incidence of a range of life-limiting diseases. It is anticipated that there will be non-monetary benefits with the development for the future prioritisation, development and provision of sports facilities at a local level in order to meet identified community need, helping to increase participation, addressing health inequalities, and other local specific factors.

### **13. Timescales/Phasing**

What are the timescales and deadlines for the proposed development?

It is estimated that if this business plan concept is approved, this will move forward as part of the overall Railway Park development project and be included within that specific project timescales.

## 14. Conclusion

The project potentially delivers a range of benefits through provision of extended and new opportunities for participation in sport and physical activity for the entire community. These opportunities and the resultant benefits will be realised through a combination of facility provision and sports development programming.

The needs and demand analysis above can be summarised as follows:

- The Bridging the Gap – Active Places Research 2009, and its subsequent update in 2014, along with the Mid Ulster District Council Sports Facility Strategy 2018 evidence that there is a need in Mid Ulster for additional pitches (grass and all weather) and that the Dungannon area has a shortfall of pitches.
- The socio-economic needs of the area indicate the catchment area to be deprived in terms of 'proximity to services'
- Local clubs have requested additional "all weather" pitch provision for training and to rely less on grass pitch (due to the seasonal inclement weather, maintenance schedules, etc) that will allow the local club's to further develop their membership bases
- The proposed addition of a 3G facility at Railway Park has the potential to be a 'community hub' to serve the various sporting clubs in the surrounding area, the schools, and general recreational play and therefore act as a catalyst for community cohesion and social wellbeing.

## 15. Recommendations

Has the proposal been approved, rejected, deferred etc. and do any conditions apply?

This business case recommends the further development of a 3G concept to be included within the previously approved Railway Park development.

<b><i>Developed by</i></b>	<b><i>Post</i></b>	<b><i>Date</i></b>
Kieran Gordon	Head of Leisure	28.04.2021

<b><i>Authorised by</i></b>	<b><i>Post</i></b>	<b><i>Date</i></b>
Anne-Marie Campbell	Director of Leisure and Outdoor Recreation	04.05.2021

<b>Name of Assigned Project Manager</b>	<b>Date</b>

# RAILWAY PARK, DUNGANNON

## CONCEPT PLAN

### RAILWAY PARK - A PLACE AND SPACE FOR EVERYONE

MID ULSTER DISTRICT COUNCIL AND GM DESIGN (APPOINTED LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS) HAVE DEVELOPED CONCEPT PROPOSALS FOR THE FORTHCOMING REFURBISHMENT OF RAILWAY PARK, BASED ON COLLECTIVE, LOCAL COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS FOR OUR SHARED GREEN SPACES

OUR PICTURE BOARD ILLUSTRATION (BELOW) PRESENTS THE CURRENT CONCEPTUAL DESIGN PROPOSAL FOR RAILWAY PARK

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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