

Report on	Potential Restructure of Intermediate Football
Date of Meeting	12 th November 2020
Reporting Officer	Kieran Gordon, Head of Leisure
Contact Officer	Kieran Gordon, Head of Leisure

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	For members to note the correspondence issued by the Irish Football Association (IFA) to the Chief Leisure Officers Association (CLOA) indicating that the planned restructure of Intermediate Football is discontinued at this time.
2.0	Background
2.1	Previously in 2019, the IFA released proposals on the planned restructuring of Intermediate Football and ground criteria.
2.2	One of the long-term objectives within the IFA's 5-year strategy 2017-2022 is to reinvigorate the everyday game. Specifically, within this objective is a proposal for the restructure of Intermediate Football.
2.3	The restructure aims were to raise standards and continue the development of the game at Intermediate level by seeking to improve the standard of football on the pitch, introducing a more standardised league format and enhancing the quality of facilities/spectator experience.
2.4	The enhanced Intermediate ground criteria requirements were required to be met by January 2021 and many Council's voiced concern at this time due to the potential financial impact and the extent of the work required for Council owned pitches to meet the required revised standards.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	The Chief Operating Officer of the IFA wrote to CLOA on 8 September 2020 advising a change in their plans to restructure Intermediate Football (see appendix A).
3.2	The correspondence notes the ongoing financial impacts that the pandemic is having on both local clubs and Councils and confirms that the IFA have taken a decision to act responsibly to safeguard the immediate financial viability and sustainability of current intermediate clubs.
3.3	As a result, the IFA have advised that the planned restructure of the intermediate game is to be discontinued at this time.
3.4	The correspondence goes on to state that it remains the intention of the IFA Board to bring about a restructure of the football pyramid in due course to provide a clear and equitable pathway for ambitious clubs.

3.5	Following the correspondence issued on 8 September 2020, Council officers have been seeking further clarity and it still remains unclear if the proposed changes to the ground criteria, as part of the restructure plans, are to be discontinued indefinitely.
3.6	All Councils are awaiting further clarity on this position, to understand any impact on current or new pitch developments and to understand how the IFA plan to take forward the re-structure of the football pyramid.
3.7	If and when any further updates are provided, further information will be brought to a future Development Committee detailing the impacts (if any) within Mid Ulster District Council.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: N/A
	Human: N/A
	Risk Management: N/A
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/A
	Rural Needs Implications: N/A
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	That members note the contents of this report and the correspondence within Appendix A.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	Appendix A – Correspondence issued by the Irish Football Association (IFA) to the Chief Leisure Officers Association (CLOA)