

Report on	Pitch and Recreational Spaces Strategy Update
Date of Meeting	11 th November 2021
Reporting Officer	Kieran Gordon, Assistant Director Health, Leisure & Wellbeing
Contact Officer	Kieran Gordon, Assistant Director Health, Leisure & Wellbeing

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.
1.3	A workshop was arranged for Members and took place on Monday 25 th October 2021.
1.4	The purpose of this report is to provide an update on progress to date.
2.0	Background
2.1	<p>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:</p> <p>(1) Part one should focus on an audit into the current design, distribution, demand/supply information and condition of each Mid Ulster District Council site that hosts Council owned and leased outdoor 'pitches' and associated changing facilities in the District. This should also include consultation and engagement with key stakeholders.</p> <p>(2) Part 2 should then build upon the part one audit and use that as a framework to create a strategy that could be used to further develop the pitch infrastructure in the District in a way that is affordable, sustainable, inclusive, high quality and consistent with current best practice in public pitch provision.</p>

2.2	It is envisaged that the final reports will provide a practical working tool to which Council can refer to whenever decisions relating to pitch provision are made in the future and this should reference indicative capital and ongoing annual revenue cost estimates.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>To date, 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).</p> <p>3.2 A full detailed report is currently being drafted and will be presented to Members. It will provide analysis on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 38 sites; 55 pitches (35 grass, 17 Artificial Turf Pitch (ATP's), 3 shale) • 16 Multi Use Games Areas (MUGA's) • 4 Bowling Greens <p>3.3 Four public focus groups were scheduled and promoted via social media, website along with targeted invitation emails to relevant Council distribution lists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Magherafelt, 7th June (25 attendees) • Cookstown, 8th June (8 attendees) • Dungannon, 9th June (25 attendees) • Cookstown, 27th September (19 attendees) <p>The focus groups sought to establish the attendees views on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of council's pitches / changing accommodation • Need for Council pitches • Sports development aspirations • Future need for facilities • Open discussion <p>3.4 During this period, a comprehensive survey was commissioned and promoted via social media, website along with targeted emails to relevant Council distribution lists. A number of stakeholder interviews also took place to include the Education Authority. The survey sought to establish clubs/groups and schools views on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and match facilities • Membership and usage profile • Teams profile • Leagues/competitions • Match and training venues • Demand, pitch quality, leases • Attitude to synthetic surfaces • Development plans

As of 26th October, the following survey returns have been received:

Sport/School	No. in Mid Ulster District Area	No. of Completed Surveys	% Completed
Association Football	30	29	97%
Bowls	7	6	86%
Gaelic Games	47	47	100%
Hockey	3	3	100%
Rugby	3	3	100%
Post Primary School	20	18	90%

3.5 Remaining clubs/schools are being actively contacted to encourage them to submit their returns and a full detailed report will be presented to Members once compiled. It is anticipated that this will be considered against the inspection reports on the current assets in the Council to then shape the final strategy development and recommendations.

3.6 It is anticipated that the final strategy should set out a 5 year plan on a priority basis (with outline recommendations to 10 years) and make area specific recommendations (with cost estimates) in relation to a range of options including:

- Refurbishments/extensions to assets
- New provision based on need
- Obsolete pitch provision and new identified shared space community need
- Partnership provision/shared
- Opportunities for long term leases
- High level specifications to accommodate the likely use pattern, sporting code and standard of competition
- Opportunities for multi-use of facilities including formalised sports and informal recreational use to support community engagement and health and wellbeing

3.7 It is anticipated that a further Member workshop(s) will be coordinated in the coming weeks to reflect on the detailed analysis to date and to begin discussing emerging recommendations.

Officers will continue to provide updates on progress and options for any decisions required via future Development Committee's when available.

4.0 Other Considerations

4.1 Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications

Financial:
Costs for strategy development within existing revenue budgets.

Human: Officer time.

	<p>Risk Management: Considered in line with relevant Council policies and procedures and will continue to ensure a more robust and standardised approach across Leisure services and facilities.</p>
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	<p>Equality & Good Relations Implications: To be considered in line with relevant policies and procedures and full screening will be carried out and considered prior final part of the strategy development.</p>
	<p>Rural Needs Implications: To be considered in line with relevant policies and procedures and full screening will be carried out and considered prior final part of the strategy development.</p>
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	To note the contents of this report on the progress to date on the development of a Mid Ulster District Council Pitch and Recreational Spaces Strategy.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	N/A