



Title of Report:	Limavady Town Scoping Exercise – outdoor sports, recreation and community provision
Committee Report Submitted To:	Leisure & Development
Date of Meeting:	18th February 2025
For Decision or For Information	For Information
To be discussed In Committee YES/NO	NO

Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)	
Strategic Theme	Resilient, healthy & engaged communities
Outcome	Citizens will have access to Council recreational facilities and protected natural environments which help them to develop their physical, emotional and cognitive health.
Lead Officer	Head of Sport & Wellbeing

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	Staff time only
Included in Current Year Estimates	YES/NO
Capital/Revenue	
Code	
Staffing Costs	Within existing salary costs

Legal Considerations	
Input of Legal Services Required	YES/NO
Legal Opinion Obtained	YES/NO

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	n/a
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	n/a
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	n/a
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	n/a
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	n/a
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	n/a

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of a planned scoping exercise on the current level of provision of outdoor sports pitches, recreational activity and community space in the town of Limavady.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Council adopted a Pitch Strategy for 2020-25 which identified a number of issues relating to the provision of sports pitches across the Borough. Contained within that report was reference to the level and type of provision in Limavady, including:

- *Ensure existing Council facilities for association football in the Limavady area are used to their full potential; consider the potential to increase the quality, capacity and flexibility of the facilities at Scroggy Road and Roemill playing fields.*
- *Develop perimeter walking/jogging paths (with lights) at a range of club and council facilities. Also consider Quay Road playing Fields and a section of the proposed Ballymoney-Ballycastle Greenway, Riada Playing Fields and Roemill Playing Fields.*

- 2.2 A mid-term review of the Pitch Strategy was presented to Leisure & Development Committee and adopted by Full Council in March 2024. This review included the following recommendations:

- **Remedial Works** - the indicative provision suggested of £0.5m per year should be earmarked for planned preventative repair and maintenance of sports pitches within the Capital Programme;
- **Prioritised Projects** - the mid term update report should be used to revisit and inform Council's prioritised list of capital projects for sports pitch provision. The projects highlighted above that have not been progressed could then be progressed to business case subject to affordability and Committee/Council approval;
- **External Capital Grant Programme** – the growing need and demand for 3G provision from underage sports teams should be considered within the design of a new external grant programme subject to affordability and Committee/Council approval; and
- **Policy position on rubber crumb in 3G pitches** – the use of rubber crumb in existing and planned 3G pitches to be kept under review and considered within future business cases and new investment decisions for Committee/Council approval.

- 2.3 A Pitch Action Plan for remedial works is currently underway; the L&D priority capital project list has been updated; an external Capital Grant Programme has been implemented with awards for 2024/25 pending; and officers continue to keep under review future business plans and investment decisions related to 3G surfaces.

- 2.4 Contained within the mid-term review an update was noted for provision in Limavady; **Ensure existing Council facilities for association football in the Limavady area are used to their full potential** - ...The need to match changing accommodation capacity to the number of pitches remains. Consideration of additional 3G pitch provision should take account of the training needs of three mass participation sports in Limavady – association football, gaelic games, rugby – in any site assessment process.

- 2.5 In 2022 Council opened its Accessible Play Park at Roemill Playing Fields. This rejuvenation of the site and the continued popularity of the facility prompted discussions about what other types of activities could further enhance this key location in the town of Limavady.
- 2.6 In 2024 Council officers and DEA Members were approached by Roe Valley Community Association (RVCA) and asked to consider the viability of a proposal for Roemill to become the venue for a Wellbeing Community Hub, operated by RVCA for the benefits of the local community and to maintain and enhance the services that RVCA currently offer.
- 2.7 The RVCA proposal suggested a rebuild of the pavilion building, with extension which would provide office and room space for the residents association. Further suggestions were put forward for enhancing the outdoor space with potential outdoor gym, running track/MUGA.
- 2.8 Council undertook a masterplan review for Limavady in 2024. While the primary focus for the review was on the town centre, it did identify a number of relevant issues for this report to consider:
- The value in connecting green infrastructure across the town.
 - Lack of connection to the river.
 - Beyond the red line of the previous masterplan's design consideration, there is scope to establish a strong link to the future green infrastructure strategy for Limavady which connects the linear, Scroggy Road playing fields, Diversity Park and the River Roe.
 - Analysis of sports and leisure facilities to ensure that the most people have access to high quality health and fitness facilities to encourage a healthier future for the local people.

3.0 Next steps

- 3.1 Officers intend to carry out a desktop review of current provision for sports pitches, recreational opportunities and community provision and some initial stakeholder consultation. The outcome of that review will dictate what, if any, further action is required based on the aforementioned strategy, masterplan opportunities and community provision request.
- 3.2 A further report will be brought back to Council with recommendations on how best to proceed.