

Title of Report:	Pitches Strategic Action Plan
Committee Report Submitted To:	Leisure & Development Committee
Date of Meeting:	15 September 2026
For Decision or For Information	For Decision
To be discussed In Committee	NO

Linkage to Council Strategy (2026-31)	
Strategic Theme	P1 Engaging and Communicating with our Customers P2 Empowering and Supporting our People
Outcome	Providing opportunities to influence council services Citizens with improved physical and mental health and wellbeing
Lead Officer	Head of Sport & Wellbeing

Estimated Timescale for Completion	
Date to be Completed	Unknown

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	Officer time
Included in Current Year Estimates	YES/NO
Capital/Revenue	Capital
Code	
Staffing 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	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

1.0 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to ask Council approval to progress to Stage 1 of the Capital Project framework – Scoping, Feasibility & OBC, for an increased synthetic pitch provision at Riada Playing Fields in Ballymoney.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 In October 2020 the Pitch Strategy for 2020-25 was adopted by Council which included key recommendations to assist with the development of business cases for new projects delivered in recent years.
- 2.2 In February and March of 2024 mid-term reviews of both the pitch and play strategies highlighted progress to date on the recommendations contained within each Action Plan and commentary where progress had yet to be made.
- 2.3 Recommendations with the mid-term Pitch review and approved by Council included;
- *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 ... that have not been progressed could then be progressed to business case subject to affordability and Committee/Council approval.*
- 2.4 Officers have been progressing with preventative repair and maintenance of Council's play parks and pitches which fall within the capital programme allocation and inspection report recommendations for prioritisation.

3.0 Next Steps

- 3.1 There are recommendations for future investment which officers feel now need to be considered based on increased demand for synthetic pitch provision in the Ballymoney area.
- *Develop additional floodlit 3G provision where need is evidenced.*
 - *Consider re-development of the Council's shale pitches where this is possible.*
- 3.2 **Additional floodlit 3G provision / re-development of shale pitches** – Each year at the start of the traditional block booking season (August to April) officers in Sport & Wellbeing work to accommodate as many sporting club applications as possible for synthetic / floodlit pitch bookings. In recent times it has proved impossible to facilitate the booking requests at the synthetic pitches at Riada Playing Fields. (The current facilities can be seen at **Annex A**) The situation is unlikely to improve as more youth teams are being established and Ladies Football is increasing. There is limited availability at alternate council sites that can meet the need, further compounded with players / parents having to travel longer distances for training sessions which adds additional costs to participation in their chosen sports.

4.0 Options

- 4.1 **3G floodlit provision at Riada Playing Fields** – Due to the existing presence of floodlighting / infrastructure, officers would wish to consider 3 options for further development;
- Convert the shale pitch into a 3G surface **OR**
 - Convert the small-sided grass pitch into a 3G surface **OR**
 - Convert Riada Stadium pitch into a 3G surface.

5.0 Affordability

- 5.1 Any further report on this project will include consideration of affordability within the Council's capital programme along with potential external funding opportunities.

6.0 Recommendation

Members are asked to consider the content of this report and recommend to Full Council that officers progress work to Stage 1 of the Capital Project framework – Scoping, Feasibility & OBC, for increased synthetic pitch provision at Riada Playing Fields in Ballymoney.

Annex B

Riada Playing Fields



- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| 1 | Stadium pitch |
| 2 | Small-sided games area |
| 3 | Shale pitch |

- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| A | existing 3G pitch |
| B | existing Astro pitch |