

Play Strategy and Pitches Strategy	14th February 2017
To: The Leisure and Development Committee For Information	

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
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
Cost: (If applicable)	Play Strategy £29k Pitches Strategy Circa £15k (pre-tender estimate)

The purpose of this report is to update the Leisure and Development Committee on ongoing work to undertake audits of the Councils infrastructure of Play facilities and 'Pitches' (for a range of sports) and to develop related strategies to guide the Council's future investment in these areas.

Background

Pitches

The Causeway Coast and Glens Facilities Strategy 2015 highlights the level of over and under supply of a range of sports facilities across the Borough. This report concludes that in 2015 there was a shortage of 47 grass pitches (or the equivalent). The recent / imminent opening of new 3G pitches in Coleraine, Dungiven and Ballymoney will reduce that undersupply by around 12 grass pitch equivalents, leaving an outstanding perceived shortfall of 35. This assessment was limited to a study of the current supply in comparison to the population size and geographic dispersal. The issue of the current state of repair of the current provision was not included and this issue has the potential to increase real shortfall in some areas.

Play

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council has inherited a stock of around 100 play parks in various states of repair / disrepair and which realise various levels of use. It is a legacy of RPA that this play infrastructure has not been planned in a way that is evidence based to meet the needs and distribution of young families across the new Borough. A number of communities have expressed the aspiration for Council to invest in new or improved play parks and this has resulted in Councillors requesting officers to progress an audit of existing play facilities and an identification of 'hot and cold spots'.

Update on Progress

Pitches

Officers have developed a Terms of Reference (ToR) for an audit of the existing stock of 'pitches' in the Borough (for a range of sporting activities) and the development of a Pitches Strategy to guide future investment. This piece of work is currently in the procurement

process with returns expected from interested contractors on or before 3 April and the contract to be completed on or before 21 August 2017.

Play

The procurement process for a Play Audit and Strategy has now been completed and PlayBoard has been commissioned to begin work on or before 20 February 2017 with the contract to be completed on or before 14 July 2017.

Key Deliverables

Both projects have been specified for completion in two parts with a 'break clause' between part one and part two. The respective key outputs for the two projects are summarised as follows:

Pitches Audit and Strategy:

Part 1 – Audit of Existing Provision:

Audit the design, distribution, demand/supply information and condition of each of around 100 sites hosting Council and community/club owned outdoor 'pitches' and associated changing facilities in the Borough. This audit is to include all natural turf and synthetic 'pitches' for association football, Gaelic games, rugby, hockey, tennis, cricket, athletics, outdoor bowls, multi-use games areas and small sided games/kick about areas.

Make recommendations and provide indicative costs in relation to any identified remedial works or further technical investigations necessary.

Part 2 – A Pitch Strategy:

Review the current hot and cold spots for pitch provision identified in The Facilities Strategy 2015 and combine this with additional condition and use pattern research to make recommendations for a prioritised 'pitch' (and associated changing provision) investment strategy for the Borough and provide indicative cost estimates. The Pitches Strategy should set out a 5-year plan and make area specific recommendations and provide cost estimates in relation to a range of options.

The Strategy recommendations should take account of levels of deprivation and barriers to access such as disability or rurality etc.

Play Facilities Audit and Strategy:

Part 1 – Audit of Existing Provision:

A qualitative audit of each of the 99 Council owned play facilities in the Borough and report on the quality of the current play infrastructure for children and young people both with and without a disability

A quantitative and spatial audit of current provision: Using current best practice guidance on the scale and distribution of play provision and report on the adequacy of the scale of the play provision for the Borough and map where the scale of provision is inadequate, adequate and over provided

Part 2 – Strategy Recommendations:

Review the Council's custom and practice in relation to the provision of equipped play facilities and make recommendations for new/improved Policies and Procedures.

Advise the Council in relation to the design of equipped play facilities and write a design brief that Council could use for the procurement of new or refurbished facilities.

Identify opportunities to sustainably improve the play provision through recommendations for new provision, retention, rationalisation, redesign, relocation and/or disposal and provide indicative costs and possible funding sources.

Provide advice on other, non-facility based, interventions that Council could consider.

Conclusions

The completion of part one of the Pitches commission will provide Council with evidence in relation to the current condition of its existing stock and part two will propose a Pitches Strategy that will assist in the process of prioritising future investments in pitches.

Upon completion of part one of the Play contract Council will have evidence with which to evaluate the justification for current play park proposals while part two will propose a design brief and a Play Strategy for the Council to consider and adopt as appropriate.