

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Environment, Enterprise and Infrastructure Committee

8 November 2017

POLICY ON PROVISION OF FACILITIES FOR OUTDOOR PITCH SPORTS

Report by Director (Environment)

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This Policy will ensure the effective and efficient management of Council facilities for outdoor pitch sports for community use. It also ensures that and that they are adequate for present and future needs.

1. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 The Council provides outdoor pitches and associated facilities in parks and at schools for a range of competitive pitch sports which contribute to the opportunities for people to lead healthy, active lives, engage in social interaction and build personal skills. This contributes to the delivery of the Scottish Government's ten year implementation plan to increase the health of the nation through physical activity entitled 'A More Active Scotland – Building a Legacy from the Commonwealth Games 2014'. It also helps to meet the Council's Corporate Plan objectives 2013-2018, in particular, objective 4, 'Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives'.
- 1.2 In order to achieve these objectives, it is important to ensure the supply of outdoor sports pitches meets the demand on an equitable and consistent basis across Perth and Kinross. The outdoor sports provided include football, rugby, athletics, golf, cricket, hockey, tennis, bowls, and includes multi-use games areas (MUGA) and synthetic turf pitches (STPs).
- 1.3 In developing the policy, the Leisure Needs Analysis (LNA), commissioned by the Council, Live Active Leisure (LAL) and **sportscotland**, was used as the reference base to assess the need for sports facilities within Perth and Kinross (Report No. 12/487 refers). The LNA used population data and participation rates to determine demand and compared that to the facilities available. It found that there was an adequate quantity of facilities for all sports, but that the quality of provision was variable.
- 1.4 To develop sport specific policies, Community Greenspace (CG) and the Live Active Leisure (LAL) Sports Development Team (SDT) assessed, updated and supplemented the LNA findings. The demand for bowls, tennis, cricket and golf within Perth and Kinross is mainly met through club based private facilities. The only facilities that are directly managed by the Council are the tennis courts at the community campuses and the North Inch Golf Course. The cricket pitches in parks in Aberfeldy, Coupar Angus, Crieff, Meigle and Perth are managed by the teams using them. Demand for athletics is met at

the Gordon Duncan Athletics Arena (GDAA) at Perth Grammar School and is managed by Live Active Leisure.

There are also grassed running tracks at Strathearn Community Campus, Perth Academy and the North Inch park in Perth.

- 1.5 Facilities for hockey, football and rugby are mainly provided by the Council. Hockey is predominantly catered for on sand dressed Synthetic Turf Pitches (STPs) within schools and community campuses. STPs provide all weather floodlit facilities. The newer 3G (third generation) STPs are commonly used for football and rugby training, and for sevens matches by youth football clubs. They can also be used for competitive adult football, particularly when grass pitches are not available. 4G STPs are the latest specification and can also accommodate rugby. The 3 and 4G STPs are not suitable for hockey due to the length of the synthetic grass pile. The majority of outdoor grassed pitches are provided by the Council in public parks and schools. School pitches, excluding the campuses, are used to capacity by schools and are generally not available for wider community use.
- 1.6 Within the Council's public parks, there are 60 grass pitch areas provided for football, rugby and cricket. The highest demand is for football and 49 pitches (38 full size and 11 sevens size) were provided for competitive football in the 2017/18 season. Considerable maintenance is required to ensure grass pitches are fit for matches. As a result, competitive teams are required to register and pay for their use. This contributes towards the costs which are met by the Council. Not all teams register and therefore play without paying. This is unfair to teams who do pay and also risks the loss of the facility if no teams are registered to use it. Engagement with clubs, both directly and through the Scottish Football Association (SFA), has been undertaken and is ongoing to identify teams using the Council's pitches, encourage them to register and work in partnership with them on any facility improvements.
- 1.7 More extensive community based analysis was required for football given its high participation rates and the number of facilities provided. This was led by CG and involved the Scottish Football Association (SFA), LAL, Education and Children's Services (ECS) and supplemented the LNA information. This identified a number of key issues including:
 - Council park pitches are integral to the overall public and community amenity so must also be available for wider community use and events.
 - Provision should be made using the 'cluster' model where facilities and demand are considered within distinct geographic areas.
 - All competitive teams need to register with the Council so demand can be accurately matched to provision.
 - The payment of pitch fees for match use makes an important contribution to the cost of maintenance and therefore the quality of the pitch. Under-registration inevitably leads to over use as well as provision and under investment which reduces the overall quality and quantity of pitches.
 - Routine and consistent pitch maintenance is likely to be most efficiently achieved by the Council, which is equipped to carry out the work on a

large scale. Community maintenance of pitches needs to be considered in terms of wider public liability and longer term sustainability.

- The need for flexibility of supply to meet demand by managing a number of general use training pitches at a lower cost, which can be brought back into match use if required. The average cost of providing and maintaining a match pitch is approximately £2,600 per pitch per year. This compares with approximately £400 for grass cutting only on a training pitch.
- Encourage clubs to work in partnership with the Council to manage use, improve the quality of the pitches they use most and take a lead role in providing managing and improving changing facilities. This needs to consider the relative merits of seasonal lets, leases and management agreements (MAs), which allow for club management and some maintenance of changing facilities and/or pitches.

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 The Policy on the Provision of Facilities for Outdoor Pitch Sports (Appendix 1) sets out proposals for the provision and management of all Council based sports facilities. It is proposed that the Council establishes a Partnership Group to implement this policy, if approved. The Group would comprise CG, LAL, sports governing bodies and representatives of local leagues and clubs. It would aim to meet on a regular basis.
- 2.2 For rugby and hockey, it is acknowledged that these are very much club based and that ongoing partnership working with the clubs to meet their specific needs will continue. Facilities are adequate for athletics and participation will be encouraged through school and community use.
- 2.3 For football, the Council will now not maintain park pitches to match standard where teams have not registered or paid for use. It is recommended that for 2017/18 season, 34 of the 38 full sized match pitches and 10 of the 11 sevens sized match pitches are provided within our parks and that 4 full sized match pitches and 1 sevens sized match pitch are reclassified as training areas. An additional 20 full sized and 38 sevens pitch areas are currently classified as training areas. Training areas are unmarked as they are not maintained to match standards but can be used free of charge for training and informal games. Seven sized training areas have fixed goalposts but no goalposts are provided on full sized training areas. If teams register in future, they can be reinstated as pitches. Any training areas which are permanently unused may, in the longer term, be incorporated into the wider park for other uses.
- 2.4 The key proposals for grass football pitches, therefore, are to:
- Use the geographical cluster based model to manage supply, demand and club development. There will be 9 areas covering Perth and Kinross:
 1. Aberfeldy
 2. Auchterarder
 3. Blairgowrie

4. Carse of Gowrie
 5. Crieff
 6. Kinross
 7. Perth City
 8. Perth Landward
 9. Pitlochry
- Provide match standard pitches only where teams register and pay for use.
 - Maintain match pitches to an adequate standard for:-
 - (i) a maximum of 2 games per week and
 - (ii) use by no more than 4 teams per pitch to avoid damage through overplaying. Undertake major repairs to damaged or substandard pitches, subject to available resources and in partnership with clubs and associations, whenever possible.
 - Reclassify pitches not used for matches as training areas on a seasonal basis and undertake grass cutting operations only. Existing fixed goal posts will be retained on 7 a side pitches for youth development.
 - Encourage clubs to undertake minor pitch maintenance, such as surface patching and work in partnership with the Council on major pitch improvements such as drainage, to maximise the use of available resources.
 - Work in partnership with clubs and associations to achieve improvement to changing facilities through CG, ECS and LAL.
 - Review and standardise Council leases and management agreements for changing facilities and pitches.
 - Work through ECS and with LAL to increase access to school and community campus based facilities, particularly to floodlit STPs and indoor facilities for winter training.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The implementation of this policy will ensure that facilities for outdoor sports are adequate for both current and future demand. It will encourage the quality of pitches and changing facilities to be improved, by increased partnership working with community clubs and associations.
- 3.2 The policy will also improve the management efficiency of park football pitches through matching pitch supply to demand from registered teams on a seasonal basis. Although it aims to provide for organised team sports, it also acknowledges the importance for health and wellbeing of providing for youth development and informal games, through the provision of training areas, and of wider public access to parks.
- 3.3 It requires an ongoing commitment, within the resources available, by the Council to continue supporting the cost of maintaining the retained public pitches to ensure they are safe and fit for purpose.
- 3.4 It is recommended that the Committee approves the Policy on the Provision of Facilities for Outdoor Pitch Sports (Appendix 1).

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	Yes / None
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	Yes
Workforce	None
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	Yes
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes
Strategic Environmental Assessment	None
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	Yes
Legal and Governance	None
Risk	Yes
Consultation	
Internal	Yes
External	Yes
Communication	
Communications Plan	Yes

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement

- 1.1 The policy relates to the delivery of the Perth and Kinross Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement by contributing to giving every child the best start in life, developing educated, responsible and informed citizens, supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives and creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

Corporate Plan

- 1.2 The Council's Corporate Plan 2013 – 2018 lays out five outcome focussed strategic objectives which provide clear strategic direction, inform decisions at a corporate and service level and shape resources allocation. They are as follows:
- (i) Giving every child the best start in life;
 - (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;
 - (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
 - (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
 - (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

- 1.3 This policy relates to (i), (ii), (iv) and (v) above.

2. Resource Implications

Financial

- 2.1 It is anticipated that implementation of the Policy will result in an increase of income from payments for pitches which will be reinvested in the pitch maintenance budget.

Workforce

- 2.2 There will be no workforce implications arising from this report, outcomes will be managed within existing resources.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.3 To ensure responsibilities for public and private facilities are clear there is a need to review leases and management agreements between the Council and private owners and community clubs.

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.
- 3.2 The policy presented in this report was considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:
- (i) Assessed as **relevant** and the following positive outcomes expected following implementation: any improvements or creation of new facilities will be designed to be accessible to all; policies to increase participation are inclusive;

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.3 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals. The policy presented in this report was considered under the Act and no further action is required as it does not qualify as a PPS as defined by the Act and is therefore exempt.

Sustainability

- 3.4 Under the provisions of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 the Council has to discharge its duties in a way which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. In terms of the Climate Change Act, the Council has a general duty to demonstrate its commitment to sustainability and the community, environmental and economic impacts of its actions.
- 3.5 The policy aims to manage Council sports facilities on a sustainable basis and to ensure that any improvement, or creation of new facilities is justified by need and that long term management and maintenance is assured.

Legal and Governance

- 3.6 The Head of Legal and Governance has been consulted on the policy presented within this report.

Risk

- 3.7 Several football clubs have claimed an unmet demand of match pitches which is of concern to developing clubs and associations. The aim of this policy is to adjust match pitch supply in line with demand from registered teams. Further and ongoing communication with clubs and associations will be carried out to encourage teams to register.

4. Consultation

Internal

- 4.1 Colleagues in Operations have been consulted on the policy presented within this report.

External

- 4.2 The Business Development and Programming Manager – Live Active Leisure has been consulted on the policy presented within this report. Discussions with the Scottish Football Association (SFA) have informed this policy. Comments from both the SFA and **Sportscotland** were received and informed the policy where appropriate, outstanding issues will be further discussed at future meetings. In addition, the policy is based on the findings within the Leisure Needs Analysis (2012) which consulted with community sports clubs and partner organisations.

5. Communication

- 5.1 The communications in relation to the policy presented in this report will be principally with community sports clubs and sports associations.

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Report to the Lifelong Learning Committee in Oct 2012 entitled Local Leisure Needs Analysis (Report Number 12/487)
- Report to the Environment Committee in March 2014 entitled Charging Criteria for Parks Events and Football Bookings (Report Number 14/119)
- Report to the Environment Committee in January 2017 entitled the Environment Service Scheme of Charges 2017/18 (Report Number 17/1)
- Perth and Kinross Leisure Needs Study 2012 Volume 2 – Outdoor Facilities

3. APPENDICES

3.1 Appendix 1: Policy on Provision of Facilities for Outdoor Pitch Sports 2017.