



Subject:	Update on Sporting Pitches Investment
Date:	21 June 2024
Reporting Officer:	David Sales, Strategic Director of City and Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Stephen Leonard, Director, City and Neighbourhood Services

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.	
Insert number <input type="checkbox"/>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Information relating to any individual2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime	
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update Committee on the timeline for the strategic work on the pitches strategy. In addition, committee is asked to note the commissioning of improvement

	works to a number of pitches across the city, and to note work being progressed by officers to investigate securing community access to sporting facilities owned by other key partners.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note the update below on improvements to pitches across the city, and to consider approval of an annual spend of £30,000 to be met from the pitches budget to secure the use of Ashfield Boys' High School as an intermediate soccer pitch for continued use by St Matthew's Football Club.
3.0	Main report
3.1	Members will be aware that work is ongoing to progress the Belfast Pitches Strategy. A report outlining the background to the need for development of the Strategy, an indicative timeline for commissioning and an overview of the Terms of Reference was presented to People and Communities Committee in August 2023 (attached at Appendix 1). It is expected that a draft strategy will be presented to committee in March 2025.
3.2	As part of that work and in the interim period of producing the Pitches Strategy, officers committed to continuing to work on an area-by-area basis to identify, agree and secure quick wins at our existing sites.
3.3	<p>Following confirmation of a recurring budget of £500,000 for pitch improvements, officers have identified the following facilities and associated works for immediate progression in the 24/25 financial year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>North - Mallusk Playing Fields</u> The creation of an additional two full-size GAA pitches to include all relevant GAA posts, ball stops, nets and including the conversion of a shale area to grass. This will create a total of four full size GAA pitches at this site. A planning application has been submitted and it is expected that this work will be completed by February 2025; <u>East - Henry Jones Playing Fields</u> Work is underway to install ball stops and spectator fencing at this GAA pitch. A planning application has been submitted and work is expected to be completed by February 2025; <u>West - Falls Park</u> Installation of ball stop netting for the GAA pitch. Recommended for approval by planning on 18th June with work expected to be completed by September 2024;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>South - Strangford Ave Playing Fields</u> Work is underway to convert one full-size soccer pitch into three small-sized soccer pitches and to reinstate a second disused full-size soccer pitch. This will maximise soccer provision at this site and cater for the displacement of SBYL soccer from Mallusk. This work will be completed by September 2024.
3.4	Further scoping work is underway at all existing sites to create a stand-by list of ready to go projects as and when budget becomes available. Further details will be brought to committee in due course.
3.5	In addition to these infrastructure improvements at council facilities, officers are also working to identify partnership opportunities to secure community access to facilities owned by the Education Authority or by other sporting clubs. Work is ongoing in this regard with a number of exploratory conversations and site visits underway.
3.6	As part of this work, an opportunity to secure the continued use of Ashfield Boys' High School as an intermediate soccer pitch for St Matthew's FC has arisen at a cost of £30,000 per annum. Members are therefore asked to consider this funding request which would be met from the pitches budget.
	<u>Financial & Resource Implications</u>
3.7	Committee are asked to approve the allocation of £30,000 per annum to Ashfield Boys' High School for the use of an intermediate soccer pitch for St Matthew's FC.
	<u>Equality Impact/Rural Needs Assessment</u>
3.8	There are no equality or rural needs implications associated with this report.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	None