

Draft Pitches Condition Survey & Investment Strategy	12th March 2019
To: The Leisure and Development Committee For Information	

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
Strategic Theme	Resilient, healthy & engaged communities; and
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)	N/A

The purpose of this report is to update Members on progress of the Draft Pitch Investment Strategy.

Background

In February 2017 Council agreed to commission a detailed Facility Audit and Pitch Strategy to include 8 different outdoor facility types:

- Association football.
- Rugby.
- Gaelic games.
- Cricket.
- Tennis.
- Hockey.
- Outdoor bowls.
- Multi-use games areas and Small sided games/kick about areas.

Key Deliverables

The key outputs for the Pitch Audit and Strategy are summarised as follows:

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 also take account of levels of deprivation and barriers to access such as disability or rurality etc.

In June 2018 Members gave indicative approval for the Draft Pitches Condition Survey & Investment Strategy and permission to commence a Section 75 compliant, 12 week public consultation on the Draft Investment Strategy. Members debate on the report contained reference for a need to convene a further Pitches Strategy Workshop to better inform the decision making process.

Next steps:

The S75 consultation period has been completed and the following extracts from the responses are noted. The extracts focus on both the results of the audit of the existing provision and the Investment Plan;

- Emphasise the importance of artificial grass and better floodlights in keeping 'everybody active' later in life.
- Provision of facilities (by council) across sport is disproportionate.
- Support organisations that promote female and underage participation.
- Look where the areas of growth are and are likely to be maintained. Support that growth and keep the Borough involved in sport.
- Fair and even distribution of provisions for all sports, particularly Gaelic Games who represent 46% of players within the entire borough.
- Address the needs of the major sport in the borough.
- Provide adequate facilities for all ladies and girls in the borough irrespective of their sport or club model that they adopt.

Prior to any further report being brought to Council for final adoption of the Pitch Strategy, officers, supported by the authors of the Pitches Condition Survey & investment Plan will facilitate a Members' Workshop to consider the S75 feedback and the content of the Investment Strategy.

This approach will also provide the opportunity for consultation with each DEA councillor grouping, allowing for members' input and agreement of the proposals relevant to specific geographical areas of responsibility.

(This corresponds with the process recommended by Members prior to the adoption of the Play Strategy).