



REPORT TO: EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE ON 11 AUGUST 2021

SUBJECT: MORAY ARTIFICIAL TURF PITCH UPDATE AND PROPOSED REPLACEMENT

BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT)

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Committee with an update in relation to the condition of Moray's artificial turf pitches.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to the Education, Communities and Organisational Development Committee following a decision of Moray Council on 17 June 2020 to agree a simplified committee structure as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the case of this Committee the combining of the delegated responsibilities of Children and Young People Services, Governance, Strategy and Performance (para 9 of the minute refers).

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:-

- i) consider and note the information in relation to the inspection report of Moray's artificial turf pitches; and**
- ii) agree to proceed to competitive tender stage for a full replacement of the Buckie artificial turf pitch.**
- iii) note that work is ongoing to create a sustainable maintenance and replacement plan for all artificial turf pitches from 2022 onwards.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At the meeting of Moray Council on 18 February 2021, the Council considered the indicative capital plan 2021/22 to 2031/32. Within this plan £430,000 was identified for resurface and rejuvenation of 3G pitches in 2021/22 and a further £25,000 in 2023/24 (para 6 of the minute refers).

- 3.2 At the meeting of Moray Council on 3 March 2021, the Council approved capital expenditure for 2021/2022 as set out in the indicative ten year Capital Plan confirming the above figures (para 5 of the minute refers).
- 3.3 In early 2021, Sports Labs Ltd were commissioned to undertake an inspection of the existing artificial turf facilities in Moray to report and determine the condition of these facilities. This inspection work took place in February and March and included the pitches at Buckie, Elgin High, Keith, Fochabers and Aberlour. The summary report is contained in **Appendix 1**.
- 3.4 The average lifespan of an artificial turf pitch is 10yrs. Both our Buckie and Speyside pitches are 13yrs old. The report indicates that both the Buckie and Speyside pitches will require replacement within the next year if we do not undertake any rejuvenation works, and that the Buckie pitch is in the poorest condition at 43% with less than 1yr left of its lifespan.
- 3.5 Rejuvenation work on the Fochabers artificial pitch was undertaken in early 2021, which has enabled this pitch to be reinstated for usage. Over the past year school and community groups had declined to use the surface due to its poor condition, which impacted significantly on the income generated at this pitch. This pitch now has an anticipated lifespan of at least 3yrs.
- 3.6 Since installation of the artificial turf pitches in 2008, the Buckie pitch has reported the most usage with nearly 10,000 users in 2017/18 and nearly 7,000 users in 2018/19. Since 2019/20 the recording of admissions for our outdoor pitches has been changed to reflect bookings made rather than individual admissions. In 2019/20 the Buckie pitch accepted over 500 bookings throughout the year. Note: these figures do not include curricular usage by the PE department at Buckie High, which is significant.
- 3.7 The artificial turf pitch at Buckie has generated income in the region of £50,000 across the 3-year period prior to the Covid pandemic.
- 3.8 Sports Labs Ltd have indicated that costs to resurface an artificial pitch would be in the region of £300,000. We therefore have allocated capital plan funding in place to resurface one pitch at this current time.
- 3.9 A new maintenance plan and operational budget for Moray's artificial turf pitches is currently under development to improve the life expectancy of our pitches in the future and to ensure we have sufficient budget for ongoing maintenance and replacement as and when required.
- 3.10 If the decision is to approve the resurfacing of the Buckie artificial turf pitch then the tender requirements for completing this facility upgrade work would include the need to complete the works taking into consideration the Council's climate change strategy recommendations.
- 3.11 To mitigate any concerns in regards to the microplastic rubber granules spreading across the environment any works connected to this facility upgrade will follow the mitigation steps identified in the KIMO International and Fidra project, Pitch In.

- 3.12 If the decision is not to approve the resurfacing of the Buckie artificial turf pitch then the likelihood will be that the pitch will remain playable for a further year. It is assumed at some point in 2022 it would then be deemed unplayable due to health and safety reasons and the facility would be locked and removed as a bookable asset from the Council's portfolio. This would have a negative impact on the Buckie High PE curriculum and Active Schools programme as well as for the community groups that regularly use this facility for their group purposes. It is also envisaged that if this facility was locked and not used then unauthorised entry onto the pitch would increase as this has been evident to a greater extent during the Covid pandemic lockdown.
- 3.13 If the decision is to approve the resurfacing of the Buckie artificial turf pitch then the next steps would be to start the procurement tender process for an external company to complete the whole project on behalf of the Council. A timeline for these works would be agreed between Education, Sport and Leisure and the Property Sections.
- 3.14 If the decision is to approve the resurfacing of the Buckie artificial turf pitch then this will leave approximately £155,000 in the resurface and rejuvenation of 3G pitches budget within the Capital Plan. The remaining £155,000 would be sufficient to rejuvenate both the Speyside and Keith pitches, which would extend their lifecycle for a further 1-2yrs.
- 3.15 As part of the financial planning process, work will be progressed over the next 6 months to consider future capital plan requests from 2022 onwards, which would include the maintenance and lifecycles of existing assets, including all artificial pitches across Moray.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

In relation to the LOIP, this report supports the healthier children focus within the Moray priority to build a better future for our children and young people in Moray. It also supports the improving life chances and development of stronger, more resilient, supportive, influential and inclusive communities focus within the Moray priority for empowering and connecting communities.

In relation to the Corporate Plan, this report contributes to ensuring our communities are caring and healthy and working towards a financially stable Council that provides valued services to our communities.

(b) Policy and Legal

Local Authorities have a legal duty to ensure adequate provision of facilities for recreational, sporting, cultural and social activities. Improving the health and wellbeing of the Moray community through sport, leisure and recreation is not only an integral part of the local vision, but it is also a national priority. In particular, the report aims to fulfil the aspirations of everyone having access to a network of quality places where you can get involved in sport, as identified as a key objective in sportscotland's Corporate Strategy "Sport for Life". The report also links to the Scottish

Government's Active Scotland Outcomes Framework, which aims to improve our active infrastructure – people and places.

(c) Financial implications

The financial implications arising from this report if approved will include approximately £300,000 of capital plan investment from the £430k approved.

Further work will be undertaken to develop plans for rejuvenation works at the Speyside and Keith facilities. However, the remaining capital allocation of £130k is unlikely to be sufficient for all works and consideration of the maintenance and lifecycles of all artificial pitches will be required as capital planning work is undertaken for 2022 onwards.

(d) Risk Implications

The risk of not resurfacing the Buckie artificial turf pitch will result in the facility being deemed a health and safety hazard at some point in 2022 and no longer fit for purpose.

(e) Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications arising from this report.

(f) Property

The property implications are set out in this report.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

There are no equality implications arising from this report.

(h) Consultations

In preparing this report, consultations have been undertaken with the Head of Financial Services, Head of Education Resources and Communities, the Legal Services Manager and Acting Head of Housing and Property and Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer whose comments have been incorporated in the report.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 That the Committee scrutinises and considers the information in relation to the inspection report of Moray's artificial turf pitches and agrees to proceed to competitive tender stage for a full replacement of the Buckie artificial turf pitch.

Author of Report: Kim Paterson, (Acting) Educational Resources Manager

Background Papers:

Ref:

SPMAN-1315769894-95

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