

**Committee decision trail on FMAs:**

- The first FMA was created in 1996 for the Mary Peters Track;
- In 2002 Committee set up an all party working group which considered the management of FMAs as many initial agreements were due to expire. An agreed list of suitable sites and criteria was identified and allocated following a publicly advertised expression of interest process (March 2003);
- In 2006 it was agreed that no further agreements be entered in to;
- The management of FMAs was again discussed throughout 2007-2008 and a framework approach for the future was approved in March 2008; the approach agreed was for any new agreements to be known as 'partner agreements'. The recommendations from this report were never progressed.
- The Playing Pitches Strategy was developed in 2011 to '... enable a programme of capital development, enhancement and maintenance investments'... 'implement and monitor a range of management options with community and statutory partners' ... 'to maximise people's participation in team sports activity'.
- Over the past two years nine of the 'pitch' FMAs are expired and renewed on a month to month basis and two will expire in 2020 and 2027;

**The review of existing FMAs revealed;-**

- a range of "partner arrangements including FMAs are in place with different clubs / organisations with different payments or funding in place across similar scale projects/ sites;
- for quality and efficiency, all pitch maintenance should be brought in-house;
- the FMA payments made to the clubs / organisations could be redrafted into an enhanced Support for Sport grant aid scheme budget;
- in general the sites and pitches under FMA do not have high levels of public use only FMA holder use;
- all bookings should be brought in-house and managed on a consistent basis;
- Sports development remains a relevant function to be delivered on playing pitch sites and can be effectively achieved by adapting existing leisure development practice e.g. combining Clubmark. Support for Sport grant aid and sports development plans.

At the FMA Member workshop (December 2011) Members confirmed that the original committee decision of 2008 to return pitch maintenance and bookings in house was still relevant. One difference to the original decision was on the future delivery of sports development. Since 2008 the Council has progressed in terms of partnership working and it was evident that there were existing ways to manage sports development of council pitch sites without introducing a parallel approach.

Party group briefings took place from Jan – Apr 2012 which informed the development of the policy and framework. The main conclusions from this stage are:

- Change in FMAs is necessary and the status quo cannot be maintained;
- Historically the main reasons why a partnership arrangement is requested is for the physical development of a site and/ or delivery of services by a third party;
- Partner agreements are set up through covenants, to support in kind activities for business agreements or as funding proposals.

- Three main routes exist to manage and assess partner requests - the Gates process, grant aid and through general procurement practice e.g. the bookings system.
- Future partner requests could be managed by enhancing existing practice;
- There is a need for public access to preserve the Council's requirement to provide open space;
- Engagement with Members, sporting organisations is required to operationally implement the framework to manage future partnership requests;