Belfast City Council

Report to:	Parks and Leisure Committee.
Subject:	**Update on Delivery of Pitches Strategy**
Date:	11 April 2013
Reporting Officer:	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure
Contact Officer:	Stephen Walker, Departmental Portfolio Programme Manager

1	**Relevant Background Information**
1.1	The Committee will recall that its meeting in March 2012 following the completion of an Equality Impact Assessment it approved the Pitches Strategy. In the interim, work has progressed towards the: • Identification of preferred locations for the additional / upgraded facilities, including discussions with end users and residents as appropriate; some of these discussions have resulted in a review of the initial preferred locations, however discussions have now been largely concluded; • The appointment of a design team has been completed and work has commenced to complete the necessary site investigations to inform the design process and move towards the submission of planning applications; design work is underway on all 10 projects; • Current estimates indicate that the delivery of the physical element of the strategy will be delivered by October 2015 in line with the Investment Programme. Members will recall that the strategy identified 10 sites across the city which would benefit from Investment through the strategy with the aim of improving facilities and greater intensification of use. Appendix 1 provides a summary of the current position for each site. The Pitches Strategy identified shortfalls of provision for some sporting codes e.g. Gaelic Football. In order to maximise use of new provision, it was also agreed that new 3G hybrid pitches would significantly intensify use and provide new opportunities across sporting codes. Members are reminded that during the prioritisation process to identify sites for investment reference was made to a potential partnership with GAA who had indicated a willingness to invest financially in a number of the sites. The Committee received a report on the establishment of a Joint Management Board with GAA at its meeting in December 2012.

| | The current position is that GAA has offered to invest £1m to support the Council in its decision to improve sports facilities through the pitches strategy. GAA has indicated that the investment would be split across 4 sites, Cherryvale Playing Fields, Cliftonville Playing Fields, Musgrave Park and Woodlands Playing Fields.

In addition, St Bridget's GAC has indicated that it would meet the cost of including a meeting room within the proposed new build at Musgrave Park at a cost of approximately £43,000.

Agreement has been reached with GAA in respect of each of the four sites above. This is subject to a letter of offer from GAA regarding the funding. |
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2	**Key Issues**
2.1	In summary, the current position is as follows: 1. Steady progress is being made in terms of the delivery of the pitches strategy and it is anticipated that the works on all the sites will be completed by October 2015. In line with the Investment Programme; Planning applications have been made in respect of three sites (Dixon Park; Musgrave Park and Waterworks Park), as indicated in Appendix 1; applications are pending in a further three sites (Victoria Park; Woodlands and Cliftonville Playing Fields) and work is underway on the preparation of drawings in respect of the four outstanding sites; 2. It has been necessary to review each site to identify all necessary works including provision of services, pitches, car parking etc. This has had consequential cost implications which were reflected to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in March 2013 and a capital budget of £14.1 million has been agreed. Members will be aware that the GAA has also committed to invest £1 million at four sites across the city to support the Council's investment. During discussions with end users a number of management issues have been raised. These will be progressed in the coming months, however Members are asked to note the following: • Owing to the construction works it may be necessary to displace teams. Work will be undertaken in the coming months to estimate the needs of the clubs affected and efforts will be made to minimise the disruption and displacement. • The issue of cost of use of 3G pitches has been raised during the public consultation exercise. Members will be aware that the cost of hiring a 3G pitch is £70 per hour as compared to the cost of natural turf pitch which is £38 per match. Clubs and sporting associations have raised the issue of cost and have asked that the Council review its pricing schedule in relation to 3G pitches. This piece of work will be progressed in the coming months and again a report will be brought forward at a future date.

3	**Resource Implications**
3.1	Financial

	The estimated cost for the delivery of the agreed pitch developments is £15.1 million. The Strategic Policy and Resources Committee has committed £14.1 million as part of its capital programme. The Committee is asked to note that the GAA has agreed to invest £1m at four sites across the city to support the Council in the delivery of the strategy. This is subject to receipt of a letter of offer from GAA.
	Human Resources
	There are no additional human resource implications at this time.
	Asset and Other Implications
3.2	The development of the new pitches and associated ancillary structures and changing pavilions will greatly enhance provision in the city and will enable greater levels of participation in sport and contribution to improved health and well being.

4	**Equality and Good Relations Considerations**
4.1	The pitches strategy has been subject to Equality Impact Assessment.

5	**Recommendations**
5.1	The Committee is asked to note the report .

6	**Decision Tracking**
Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure	

7	**Key to Abbreviations**
GAA - Gaelic Athletic Association GAC - Gaelic Athletic Club	

8	**Documents Attached**
Appendix 1 Summary of current position regarding delivery of physical element of pitches strategy.	