



<b>Subject:</b>	Review of Pitch Allocation
<b>Date:</b>	7 June 2016
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nigel Grimshaw, Director of City and Neighbourhood Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Rose Crozier, Assistant Director Claire Sullivan, Policy and Business Development Unit Manager

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

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	Members are reminded that a report was brought to the People and Communities Committee meeting in May 2016 outlining the findings of the review of grass soccer pitch allocation and that it was deferred to allow Party Briefings to take place. These briefings took place during the last week of May. A copy of that report is attached as <b>Appendix 1</b> . This report outlines the next steps in the process which have been revised following the discussions and feedback from the Party Briefings.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to agree the next steps as outlined in the report including:  (i) That the allocation of grass soccer pitches for matches will be through leagues only, as at present, and that Down Area Winter League (DAWL) are afforded the coming season (16/17) as a transition period;  (ii) That members agree the application of criteria to be used in exceptional circumstances where there are multiple requests for a pitch and no mutual agreement between clubs, as outlined in the matrix at appendix 3 of the May 2016 Committee report;  (iii) That in the case of the Westland Pitch at Waterworks, engagement takes place with relevant stakeholders with a view to reaching a decision on allocation for the 16/17

	<p>season, and;</p> <p>(iv) That Members agree the criteria outlined in appendix 2 of the May 2016 Committee report to check eligibility of leagues seeking allocation of pitches in Belfast.</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	The findings and recommendations of the independent review of Council's current soccer grass pitch allocation for block bookings are presented in the May Committee report attached as Appendix 1.
3.2	<p><u>Future allocation process</u></p> <p>A key recommendation of the report is that the use of grass soccer pitches for matches are allocated directly through leagues. Currently there is only one league (DAWL) not following this process and they will be afforded the coming season (16/17) as a transition period. If this does not suit their needs, individual teams can still book pitches on a casual basis. Currently the NI Women's Football association (NIWFA) fixtures are booked individually on a casual basis by the individual teams. There was agreement at the Party Briefings in relation to this proposal and the only concern was ensuring that DAWL were afforded a transitional period.</p>
3.3	<p><u>Specific management of multiple requests for a pitch</u></p> <p>Multiple requests for a specific pitch are an exception and in the first instance we will work with the leagues to resolve the issue to the satisfaction of all parties. Where possible we will put in place ground sharing arrangements or provide alternative venues. There have been a few instances where it has not been possible to come to a solution and a current example is the pitch in the Waterworks (Westland end). There have been several requests for this pitch as a result of the new changing facilities and to date no solution has been reached. It was proposed that in exceptional circumstances such as the Waterworks case, requests would be assessed using the matrix as outlined in the May 2016 Committee report.</p>
3.4	The preferred position following feedback from the Party Briefings was that multiple requests should be managed through dialogue with all parties concerned. There was recognition that this is not always possible and that a process did need to be put in place to deal with exceptional cases. As no alternative solutions were forthcoming, it is proposed that the criteria as previously outlined are adopted to be applied in these exceptional circumstances. In relation to the unresolved situation with the pitch in the Waterworks, it is

	<p>proposed that stakeholders are engaged with in the coming weeks to apply the criteria to reach a resolution.</p>
3.5	<p><u>Next steps</u></p> <p>It is proposed that the following next steps be undertaken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That a meeting be held with league secretaries to outline the findings of the review and the implementation process.</li> <li>• That the new process of all block bookings for grass soccer pitches being managed through leagues be implemented for the 16/17 season</li> <li>• That a transition period be afforded to the DAWL for the 16/17 season</li> <li>• That engagement take place with relevant stakeholders to resolve the Westland pitch allocation using the agreed criteria.</li> </ul>
3.6	<p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The administering of this process will be met from existing resources. Additional human resources may be required to assess multiple requests for a specific site and this will be kept under review.</p>
3.7	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>An initial equality opinion has been provided by the consultant as part of the report and ongoing engagement is planned with the relevant stakeholders. The process will be equality screened in line with the Council's equality process.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices</b>
4.1	Appendix 1: P&C Report and associated appendices re. Review of Pitch Allocation May 2016