



<b>Subject:</b>	Potential Restructure of Intermediate Football
<b>Date:</b>	6 October 2020
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Ryan Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Kelly Gilliland, Neighbourhood Services Manager, North

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
<b>After Committee Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>After Council Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Some time in the future</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Never</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
<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 or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	To advise committee of correspondence issued by the Irish Football Association (IFA) to the Chief Leisure Officers Association (CLOA) indicating that the planned restructure of Intermediate Football is discontinued at this time.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	Committee is asked to (i) Note the correspondence. (ii) Agree for Officers to write to the IFA seeking further clarity around the proposed changes to ground criteria and in the context of this being discontinued 'at this time'

	and to seek further clarity around the Associations plans to take forward the restructure of the football pyramid.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	People and Communities committee of 10 September 2019 considered a report regarding the IFA's planned restructuring of Intermediate Football and ground criteria. The impact of the proposed changes were far reaching with significant impact on 13 Belfast clubs at 12 Belfast City Council sites. At this meeting it was agreed that committee would invite IFA staff to attend a future meeting to discuss the proposals and impacts for clubs and Council.
3.2	<p>IFA staff attended People and Communities committee of 20 November 2019 and detailed the plans and timelines for the proposed restructuring along with the new grounds criteria. The committee agreed that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. a report be submitted to a future meeting outlining the extent of the work which would be required to be undertaken to bring those Council-owned pitches which were used currently for intermediate football up to the required standard under the proposed restructure, together with indicative costings;</li> <li>2. the aforementioned report should set out potential actions which, in the opinion of the City Solicitor, could be taken in relation to the failure by the Irish Football Association to consult with the Council at any stage in the restructuring process; and</li> <li>3. should it be considered necessary for the Irish Football Association to attend a future meeting on this issue, that its Chief Executive and President be invited to attend in person.</li> </ol>
3.3	The Chief Operating Officer of the IFA wrote to CLOA on 8 September 2020 advising a change in their plans to restructure Intermediate Football (see appendix 1).
3.4	The correspondence notes the ongoing financial impacts that the pandemic is having on both local clubs and Councils and confirms that the IFA have taken a decision to act responsibly to safeguard the immediate financial viability and sustainability of current intermediate clubs. As a result the IFA have advised that the planned restructure of the intermediate game is to be discontinued at this time.
3.5	The correspondence goes on to state that the it remains the intention of the IFA Board to bring about a restructure of the football pyramid in due course to provide a clear an equitable pathway for ambitious clubs.

3.6	<p>It is unclear if the proposed changes to the ground criteria, as part of the restructure plans, are to be discontinued indefinitely and it is recommended that Officers make formal contact with the IFA to clarify this position, to understand any impact on current or new pitch developments and to understand how the Association plan to take forward the re-structure of the football pyramid.</p> <p><u>Finance &amp; Resource Implications</u></p>
3.7	<p>No current financial impact from this decision.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p>
3.8	<p>There are no additional impacts related to this report.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b>
	Appendix 1 - Letter from Irish Football Association, Head of Operations to Honorary Secretary, Chief Leisure Officers Association