

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18^h DECEMBER 2018

**A COUNCIL WIDE PLAN FOR THE DELIVERY OF ACCESSIBLE
ARTIFICIAL TURF PITCHES (ATP) AND 3G PITCHES**

REPORT OF DIRECTOR PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION & COMMUNITY SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH COUNCILLOR ANN CRIMMINGS, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT, LEISURE AND HERITAGE SERVICES AND COUNCILLOR JOY ROSSER, CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING

Authors: David Batten, Head of Leisure, Parks & Countryside and Andrea Richards, Head of 21st Century Schools.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to propose the development of a Council wide plan for full public access to artificial turf pitches (ATP) and 3G pitches with a common pricing policy.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet

- 2.1 Consider and, if appropriate, approve the proposed full public access plan alongside the common pricing policy for ATP and 3G pitches as set out in Section 5 of this report.
- 2.2 Consider that Leisure and Parks, with 21st Century Schools, continually engage with Secondary Schools in the development and implementation of the proposed full public access plan and common pricing policy

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 A Council wide public access plan and pricing policy for ATPs and 3G pitches would further enhance the Council's commitment to sport across the County Borough.
- 3.2 Fully accessible ATP and 3G pitches allows the Council to develop junior sport hubs with curricular, extra-curricular and sports club

training and fixtures taking place on ATP and 3G pitches throughout the year.

- 3.3 Fully accessible ATP and 3G pitches encourages the further development of close links between schools and the local community. It provides pupils with local opportunities to participate in sport, improving both their physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- 3.4 Maximising usage of all Council ATP and 3G pitches will positively affect both junior and adult participation rates across the County Borough.
- 3.5 A Council wide pricing policy would ensure that the top quality facilities are affordable regardless of location.
- 3.6 A single access point for information on all Council owned ATP and 3G pitches links in with the outcomes and objectives for the proposed Community Hubs.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Council has committed to achieve its aim of every resident to live within a 3-mile radius of a 3G pitch.
- 4.2 The Council, through a collaborative approach between Leisure and Parks with 21st Century Schools, has invested in the development of 3G pitches over the last 3 years. A list of all current locations are included in Appendix 1.
- 4.3 There is existing full access, both curricular and community, with a common price across facilities managed and maintained by Leisure and Parks. Within school sites, there is limited weeknight and weekend community access with a disparity in prices.
- 4.4 The ATP and 3G pitches present the Council with an opportunity to develop a pro-active, collaborative approach to junior sport.
- 4.5 School based sport will have access to top quality facilities for curricular and extra-curricular opportunities as well as school sports teams.
- 4.6 Working with the local leagues, sports clubs and the National Governing Bodies of Sport, the Council will develop opportunities for the mini and junior age groups to train and play on a top quality surface, encouraging more children and young people to become active throughout the County Borough.

- 4.7 The 3G pitches can assist the Council to further protect the existing stock of grass sports pitches. The all-weather surface allows for continued usage during inclement weather. It also allows for back-to-back usage with no need to 'rest' the pitch in between sessions or seasons.

5. THE FUTURE PROPOSAL

- 5.1 The proposal for the future development and delivery of ATP and 3G pitches is multi faceted. For the purpose of this report, each element is specifically defined – public access, pricing and maintenance.

5.1 Public Access Plan for ATP and 3G Pitches

- 5.1.1 Currently the management of Council ATP and 3G pitches lies with the Leisure and Parks Department and specific Schools.
- 5.1.2 This proposal would result in Leisure and Parks operating all ATP and 3G pitches outside of school hours i.e. weeknights and weekends.
- 5.1.3 The proposal would ensure that schools have access to the facilities for curriculum and extra-curriculum sessions (8am – 5pm) with full public access from 5pm on weeknights and over the weekend (9am – 5pm on both days).
- 5.1.4 Leisure and Parks recognise that resources will need to be made available to manage the public access time. Discussions with Schools regarding site security, access and egress of facility users and the deployment of staff will need to take place as part of the process.
- 5.1.5 Leisure and Parks, using the Gladstone system, will undertake the administration of ATP and 3G pitches bringing the process in line with current Leisure booking procedures, including online bookings, payment via debit and credit card and casual bookings.
- 5.1.6 This system will continue to ensure that existing block bookings made by sports clubs and community groups are protected, as well as regular maintenance time allocated.
- 5.1.7 Further discussions will take place on how income from the public access bookings are allocated to the Schools that have an ATP or 3G on site.
- 5.1.8 The full public access alongside streamlined administration procedures would ensure that access to top quality sports facilities are maximised by those that live, work and visit Rhondda Cynon Taf.

5.2 The Common Pricing Policy

5.2.1 The current situation is that there is no consistency in the pricing of ATP and 3G pitches between Leisure and Parks and individual School sites.

5.2.2 The current 3G price structure in Leisure and Parks is based on the old pricing structure for ATP's, and has not been renewed for a number of years. The current Leisure and Parks prices are as follows:-

	Junior		Adult	
	With Lights	Without Lights	With Lights	Without Lights
Full Pitch	£27.00	£8.75	£54.05	£36.05
Half Pitch	£13.55	£4.40	£27.00	£18.00

A comparison of current prices across Leisure and Parks and school sites can be found in Appendix 2.

5.2.3 As can be seen from the Leisure and Parks prices outlined in 5.2.2, there is no real logic underpinning the pricing structure. It is therefore recommended that the Council takes the opportunity to introduce a coherent pricing policy which all users will be able to understand. The suggested revised prices are as follows:

	Junior	Adults
Full Pitch	£25.00	£55.00
Half Pitch	£12.50	£27.50

The rationale behind the suggested revised prices is based on the following criteria:

- A new year-round single price point eliminating the differential between 'with lights' and 'without lights' pricing.
- This single price point still ensures that junior sport is affordable.
- This will have minimal impact on sports clubs over the course of the season as the majority of usage for clubs, both junior and adult, is aligned to the current 'with lights' price taking place between September and April (traditional winter sports season). (See

Appendix 3 for a summary of the impact of revised pricing on clubs based on a comparison with actual 2017/18 charges).

5.2.4 In order to align consistency of access to School ATP and 3G pitches, it is proposed that the revised pricing structure detailed in 5.2.3 above is rolled out to all Schools. This measure has the potential to realise a considerable increase in the usage of facilities across the County Borough, and will reduce travel times and costs for those teams looking to keep their costs as low as possible.

5.2.5 There has been an increase in the number of commercial organisations charging premium prices to users whilst accessing the Council subsidised rate. Therefore, it is proposed that the Council also introduces a commercial rate for ATP and 3G pitches as follows:

	Junior and Adults
Full Pitch	£110.00
Half Pitch	£55.00

5.2.6 The proposed new commercial rate would ensure that the Council maximise income through the private sector whilst maintaining affordable opportunities for voluntary sector organisations.

5.2.7 Further work will need to be done to ensure that a commercial pricing policy is developed and introduced across Leisure and Parks.

5.3 The Maintenance of ATP and 3G Pitches

5.3.1 Currently the maintenance of Council ATP and 3G pitches lies with the Leisure and Parks Department and specific Schools.

5.3.2 Through the proposal, Leisure and Parks will carry out the maintenance of all Council owned ATP and 3G pitches.

5.3.3 Leisure and Parks recognise that resources will need to be made available to carry out this level of maintenance.

5.3.4 The Council recognises that a robust maintenance schedule needs to be developed in order to protect the considerable investment into the facilities.

5.3.5 Further discussions with Rhondda Cynon Taf Education and Schools will take place on how the management and maintenance of ATP and 3G pitches is planned and delivered going forward, ensuring that they are available for future generations.

6. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment screening form has been prepared for the purpose of this report. A full report is not required at this time.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 7.1 The proposed single price point will result in a marginal increase in income although some of the clubs see an increase and some see a decrease (depending on their previous mix of with lights or without lights) (see Appendix 3).
- 7.2 To offset any potential concerns from the users it is proposed that the revised prices are introduced from April 2019 and are frozen until April 2021.
- 7.3 Overall, the proposal is unlikely to incur additional cost to the Council. This is without taking into consideration additional income from the proposed commercial rate for private organisations.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 8.1 There are no legal implications at this time.

9. CONSULTATION

- 9.1 Regular consultation with Sport Wales and the National Governing Bodies of Sport through the RCT Collaboration Group.
- 9.2 Consultation occurs with the local football leagues through annual meetings with the Head of Service, Cabinet Member and Council Leader.
- 9.3 Leisure and Parks alongside 21st Century School have carried out consultation with a number of Secondary Schools in relation to public access of ATP and 3G pitches.

10. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN/OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/SIP/FUTURE GENERATIONS – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- 10.1 Improved accessibility of facilities and increased opportunities within local communities will have a positive impact on the lives of people that live and work in the County Borough.
- 10.2 The development of new facilities throughout communities in Rhondda Cynon Taf, alongside increased participation supports the seven well-being goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act and

Council priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan, The Way Ahead 2016-2020.

- 10.3 Improved local facilities support the development of neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work promoting health and well-being and positive lives for everyone.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 Both ATP and 3G pitches maximises the Council's commitment to sport in Rhondda Cynon Taf for current as well as future generations.
- 11.2 Increased public access to sports facilities will improve the health and wellbeing of those that live, work and visit Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 11.3 The proposed single price point will give clarity to the users and will be easier to administer but more importantly still remains affordable for all users.
- 11.4 The facilities present the Council with all-weather sports pitches that encourages participation whilst protecting the current stock of grass pitches. Affordable and accessible ATP and 3G pitches encourages sports clubs to train, and where possible play complete fixtures, at an alternative venue reducing the usage of the Council's grass pitches and therefore increasing their longevity for years to come.
- 11.5 The development of junior sports hubs located at ATP and 3G pitches allows the Local Authority to maximise opportunities for children and young people to participate in sport in their local community.
- 11.6 The strategic framework maximises opportunities for sports clubs across the County Borough to train and play on state of the art facilities.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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Background Papers

None.

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