
Report To:	Education & Communities Committee	Date:	30 October 2018
Report By:	Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development	Report:	EDUCOM/93/18/GM/HS
Contact Officer:	Hugh Scott, Services Manager	Contact No:	01475 715459
Subject:	Crawl Space Access to Inverclyde Academy's Pitches		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Education and Communities Committee on the provision of a crawl hole at Inverclyde Academy 3G pitch following a one year trial.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 A petition was submitted to the Council requesting the provision of either crawl space access to Inverclyde Academy's pitches or the creation of suitable 3G pitches for the area. The petition was considered at the Petitions Committee on 15 June 2017.
- 2.2 The Petitions Committee decided to support the petition and asked for a detailed report to be brought to the Education and Communities Committee for the Committee's consideration. The Education and Communities Committee agreed to a one year trial period of a crawl space with the proviso that the trial be suspended in the event of significant damage. If the trial proved to be successful, then consideration would be given to the suitability of providing similar access to other school pitches in Inverclyde.
- 2.3 Unfortunately, during the trial period there has been an increase in damage to the pitch, and demand on janitorial services due to increased litter picking duties each day and especially after weekends and school holidays. There has also been one significant incident of vandalism to the pitch (Appendix 1).
- 2.4 The trial has not been a success given that there has been damage to the pitch. However, given the strength of feeling in the community about allowing access to the pitch, it is recommended that the trial period be extended for a further 6 months period to monitor any ongoing issues and incidents of vandalism.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
1. Agrees that the trial of a crawl hole at the Inverclyde Academy 3G pitch be extended for a 6 months period with the proviso that the trial can be suspended in the event of any further significant damage to the pitch
 2. Agrees to postpone the roll out of other crawl holes within the schools estate.

Ruth Binks
Corporate Director
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4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 The Petitions Committee convened on 15 June 2017 to consider the following petition which had been submitted to the Council with 593 signatures:

“We demand the creation of crawl-spaces and opening of Inverclyde Academy AstroTurf pitches to local youngsters on a 24/7 basis or the creation of a suitable 3G AstroTurf pitch within the immediate locality to bring the area up to a similar standard with other areas in Inverclyde.”

4.2 It should be noted that whilst crawl holes are not in place for pitches associated with schools, in some respects the 3G pitch at Inverclyde Academy is more suitable for a crawl hole than any others in the school estate. The pitch is outside the overall school campus and can be accessed without giving wider access to the school grounds. The pitch is also covered by the school's CCTV system. It should be noted on the latter point, however, that the CCTV system is not actively monitored and will, at most, therefore only be of use evidentially should the pitch be damaged. The system will not lead to any intervention to prevent damage and any deterrent effect is doubtful.

4.3 There are not any particular child protection issues at the Inverclyde Academy 3G pitch as the pitch is in fairly open view of the surrounding area. This is not the case in a number of other schools, in common with the access issue in 4.2 above. Any decision to allow a crawl hole at Inverclyde Academy should therefore not be seen as a precedent for other school pitches.

4.4 The Petitions Committee had two possible options:

- to reject the petition, bringing the matter to an end; or
- to support the petition and require Officers to submit a detailed report to the appropriate Service Committee on the subject matter of the petition

4.5 The Petitions Committee decided to support the petition in principle, and asked for officers to submit a detailed report to the Education and Communities Committee on 5 September 2017. Given the specific circumstances outlined in 4.2 and 4.3, the Education and Communities Committee agreed to the trial of a crawl hole at Inverclyde Astro Turf with the proviso that the trial could be suspended in the event of significant damage occurring as a result of the crawl hole being installed. The Education and Communities Committee asked that a report be submitted following a 1 year trial period to determine if the trial had been successful and if it could be extended to other pitches.

5.0 CURRENT POSITION

5.1 There are a number of issues that have come to light during the trial period of the crawl hole. The school reports that over the last year they have seen an increase in damage to the pitch and equipment such as goals and nets. This has had a direct impact on the delivery of the PE curriculum for the school.

5.2 Whilst broken glass has always been an issue because of youths drinking on the pitch, incidents of broken glass have increased since the trial began. Complaints have been received from both the school and those who hire the pitches.

5.3 The trial has increased demands on janitorial staff and letting officers for picking up litter and ensuring that the pitch is safe and suitable for day to day use.

5.4 Disappointingly, there has been one significant incident of damage to the pitch which is highlighted in Appendix 1. This level of damage had never occurred at this pitch prior to the installation of crawl holes. The trial has not been suspended as a result, although any further damage would mean a significant impact on the ability to deliver PE.

5.5 Officers recommend that the trial period is extended for a further 6 months period. This is because at this stage the trial cannot be seen as successful because the installation of crawl holes has resulted in extra work for janitorial staff and letting officers. However, whilst incidents of

litter and damage have increased, they were always present in some way and this needs to be balanced with the opportunity for the community use of the facility. The damage to the pitch is a concern, and any further damage would almost certainly rule out the pitch for curriculum use and suspend the trial.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

Finance

- 6.1 The provision of a crawl holes results in costs in terms of staff time for safety checks and litter picks, of increased wear and tear on equipment and potential further damage to the pitch and equipment.

Financial Implications:

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact £000	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report £000	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

6.2 Legal

None.

6.3 Human Resources

None.

6.4 Equalities

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES (see attached appendix)
X	NO - This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

6.5 Repopulation

None.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Petition for Consideration: Provision of Crawl Space Access to Inverclyde Academy's Pitches or Creation of a Suitable 3G Pitch in Locality – Petitions Committee June 2017 LP/053/17.

Education and Communities paper 5 September 2017 - Crawl Spaces for Inverclyde Academy Pitches.

Appendix 1





