

---

<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Education &amp; Communities Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>10 March 2020</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Corporate Director Education, Communities and Organisational Development</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>EDUCOM/20/20/HS</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Hugh Scott, Service Manager Community Learning Development, Community Safety &amp; Resilience and Sport</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 715450</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Pilot on the provision of crawl spaces on secondary school 3G pitches</b>		

---

## 1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Education and Communities Committee on the pilot of crawl spaces which were installed at 3G pitches at Inverclyde Academy, St Columba's High School and Port Glasgow Community Campus.

## 2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report provides an update to elected members on issues relating the provision of crawl spaces in the perimeter fences at the 3G pitches at three of our secondary schools.
- 2.2 Although some issues remain, incidences have reduced in recent months.
- 2.3 The report recommends extending the existing pilot for a further year with monitoring procedures in place, but not to extend the provision of crawl spaces to additional sites at this time.

## 3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Education and Communities Committee:
1. notes the progress in the provision of crawl spaces at Inverclyde Academy, St Columba's High School and Port Glasgow Community Campus;
  2. agrees to the extension for one more year at current sites, with monitoring procedures remaining in place; and
  3. agrees to a final evaluation report being submitted to the Committee in a year's time.

**Ruth Binks**  
**Corporate Director**  
**Education, Communities and Organisational Development**

## 4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 In June 2017, the Petitions Committee considered the following petition:

“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 Due to a generous provision of artificial pitches in Inverclyde, no identified budget, nor an appropriate site in which to build another 3G pitch, the Petitions Committee agreed to pilot the provision of a crawl space being created at Inverclyde Academy to support community use of the pitch when it was not booked. A report was then provided to the Education and Communities Committee in October 2018 which reported significant issues with the provision of the crawl space in that there was continued, extensive damage to the pitch. Nevertheless, the Committee agreed to extend the provision for a further six months. At the same time, officers extended the crawl space provision to the pitches at St Columba’s High School and the Port Glasgow Community Campus. A further report to extend the pilot for another six months was agreed at the May 2019 Education and Communities Committee.
- 4.3 A number of issues arose during the initial 6 months trial period at Inverclyde Academy. The school reported that over the year, it experienced an increase in damage to the pitch, goals and nets. This had a direct impact on the delivery of the PE curriculum for the school. However, over the past 6 months, there have been no reports of any damage to the pitch, goals, nets or surrounding area although littering remains an issue across all the sites.
- 4.4 Whilst broken glass on the pitch was an issue, such incidents have decreased in frequency in recent months. Similarly, there has been a reduction in complaints being received from both the school and clubs who use the pitches. The Community Warden Service continues to visit and monitor the sites. Nevertheless, the pilot has placed increasing demands on janitorial staff and letting officers to pick up litter and ensure the pitch is safe and suitable for day-to-day use.
- 4.5 The decision to cut crawl holes in the perimeter fence rather than opening the gate was to maintain security at the school while reducing the Council’s liability should anyone be injured climbing over the perimeter fence at a pitch. However, it has now been confirmed that the Council would have limited liability should such an incident occur. Additionally, there were concerns the lack of a crawl space would make it difficult for emergency services to gain access to the pitch, should someone be injured. It has now been established that emergency services have equipment which would allow access to the pitches if needed.
- 4.6 Nevertheless, there remain a number of issues around the creation of any new crawl spaces at additional sites. Security and the risk of damage to the pitches and to equipment such as goals and nets remain. Additionally, there are increased demands on janitorial staff at the start of each school day to ensure pitches are safe and suitable for school use. It should also be noted that pitches are only available for community use when they have not been booked and are often only available for community use during the day in the summer months.
- 4.7 As issues around vandalism remain, the service will continue to monitor the sites through the community warden service, monitor complaints and issues raised by schools and clubs. It is therefore not recommended extending crawl space provision to any further sites at this time.

## 5.0 IMPLICATIONS

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

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

### 5.1 Legal

None

### 5.2 Human Resources

None

	YES
✓	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required

### 5.3 Equalities

#### Equalities

(a) Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
✓	NO

(c) Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
✓	NO

## **6.0 CONSULTATIONS**

6.1 None.

## **7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 None.