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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Education and Communities Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>10 March, 2015</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Corporate Director, Education, Communities and Organisational Development</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>EDUCOM/30/15/JA</b>
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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Policy for Access to all Sports and Leisure Pitches</b>		

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## **1.0 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to recommend the adoption of an access policy for all sports and leisure facilities owned or operated by the Council.

## **2.0 SUMMARY**

- 2.1 Over a number of years a range of arrangements has developed with individual clubs and groups in respect of access to council sports pitches.
- 2.2 In order to provide equity of access and to provide a framework for reaching agreement with clubs and organisations seeking financial support, either specifically or through discounted or concessionary charges for use, officers have developed the policy detailed in appendix 1.
- 2.3 The policy specifies both general and specific conditions for access to Council owned pitches and sets out the conditions which clubs or organisations seeking financial support would be required to meet.

## **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 That the committee approve the Policy for Access to all Sports and Leisure Pitches as detailed in Appendix 1.
- 3.2 That delegated authority is granted to the Corporate Director Education, Communities and Organisational Development, in consultation with the Head of Legal and Property Services and the Chief Financial Officer, to negotiate funding agreements with specific clubs and organisations seeking financial support in accordance with the policy and with existing budget provisions.

John Arthur  
Head of Safer and Inclusive Communities

## **4.0 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 Over a number of years a range of agreements, of varying formality, have been made with specific clubs and organisations in support of their access to council sports and leisure pitches. The detail and substance of some of these agreements is in dispute.
- 4.2 What is clear is that the current position in respect of access to pitches is potentially inequitable, particularly for sports other than football.

## **5.0 PROPOSALS.**

- 5.1 It is proposed that a policy is adopted which sets out a framework for access to all pitches primarily on the basis of 'pay per play' with the proviso that the Council will consider offering specific support to clubs and organisations where they can meet certain criteria, including participation in sports development objectives, community benefit and sustainability.
- 5.2 The policy makes specific reference to Junior and Senior Football in Inverclyde, however the principles applying to those organisations will apply equally to all team sports in Inverclyde seeking support. Specific provision is made in the policy to supporting sports catering for women and girls.
- 5.3 The policy also provides a set of principles which would allow the provision of concessionary charges, or specific financial support to clubs or organisations who meet certain criteria.

## **6.0 Consultations**

- 6.1 The Head of Legal & Property Services has been consulted on the content of this report.

## **7.0 IMPLICATIONS**

### **Finance**

- 7.1 Financial assistance will only be approved, on a case by case basis, following consultation with the Chief Financial Officer.
- 7.2 Financial assistance will be limited by available budgets.

### **Legal**

- 7.2 None at this stage.

### **Human Resources**

- 7.3 None

### **Equalities**

- 7.4 Historically, support for access has been provided predominately for one sport, football. Whilst there have been improvements in engaging women and girls in this sport, it remains a male dominated pursuit. Accordingly, the policy states that;- "the Council seeks to encourage equality of access irrespective of gender, and may provide specific or additional support to those clubs or organisations providing opportunities for access to women and girls".

### **Repopulation**

- 7.5 The high quality of provision of sports and leisure facilities in Inverclyde is an important factor in retaining and attracting residents to the area.

## **8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

8.1 None

**INVERCLYDE COUNCIL**

**POLICY FOR ACCESS TO ALL SPORTS AND  
LEISURE PITCHES.**

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## **Inverclyde Council**

### **POLICY FOR ACCESS TO ALL SPORTS AND LEISURE PITCHES.**

1. The Council has invested in and developed a thorough programme of modernisation of its sports estate, including sports pitch facilities.
2. This investment is a commitment to promoting and supporting public and community access to these facilities. It is recognised that access to these facilities is important for the health and wellbeing and recreation of the people of Inverclyde.
3. In recognition of the investment and priority given to sports provision it is essential to reflect the various interests of all members of the community in obtaining access to these necessarily limited facilities, especially during periods of high or peak demand. All access will be regulated on a fair and reasonable 'pay per play' basis, with fees being set according to a fair and reasonable basis and in consultation with partners. This revenue is an essential contribution to the overall running, maintenance and replacement costs of these facilities. This provides equity of access to all.
4. No person shall have exclusive rights of access to public facilities except as where specifically negotiated by means of properly approved leases or other agreements. All persons shall respect the rights and interests of other users from the community in the facilities.
5. The Council, in furtherance of its policies in sports development and health promotion, may make concessionary rates and charges, or specific subsidy, available to specific groups.
6. Appendix 1a details the fees and charges applicable at 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2015, to sports and leisure pitches. Appendix 1b details the current waivers policy in place for under 19 team access.

#### **Junior Football.**

1. Junior Football is an important element in football and player development in Inverclyde. The Council will seek to support, insofar as is possible, Junior Football Clubs in fulfilling their important contribution to football development and the communities of Inverclyde. Its sports facilities will be available on the above principles for access and use by the Junior Clubs of Inverclyde.
2. The Council may vary its rates and charges or provide specific subsidy to the Junior Clubs of Inverclyde depending on need. Any such agreement shall be dependent on clubs demonstrating to the satisfaction of the Council the need for such support. No such agreement will imply any exclusive continuing rights of access to Council facilities.
3. The Junior clubs will be expected to commit to making appropriate application for financial support with all suitable backing and supporting documentation including disclosure of timeous annual accounts.
4. Any Council support will be subject to conditions such as the junior club's full participation with the above policy, working within the SFA's club development

programme and with local youth development teams and constructive participation in Community Sports Hubs, where appropriate.

5. The Council may enter into individual and separate support arrangements with the clubs depending on the assessment of need, and compliance with overall Council objectives.
6. Any support arrangements with clubs will be necessarily constrained by the budgets available for this purpose.

### **Senior Football.**

- 1 Senior Football is an important element in football development in Inverclyde, and plays an important part in the social fabric of the community. Uniquely the Senior football team's Youth Academy provides the sole pathway for elite youth development in Inverclyde. Therefore, the Council will seek to support, insofar as is possible, Senior Football and any Youth Academy provision to fulfil their important contribution to football development and the community of Inverclyde. Such support will be dependent on a reasonable percentage of Inverclyde residents participating in the Youth Academy. Its sports facilities will be available on the above principles for access and use by the Senior Club of Inverclyde.
- 2 The Council may vary its rates and charges or provide specific subsidy to the Senior Club depending on need. Any such agreement shall be dependent on the club demonstrating to the satisfaction of the Council the need for such support. No such agreement will imply any exclusive continuing rights of access to Council facilities.
- 3 The Senior club will be expected to commit to making appropriate application for financial support with all suitable backing and supporting documentation including disclosure of timeous annual accounts.
- 4 Any Council support will be subject to conditions such as the Senior club's full participation with the above policy and working within the SFA's club development programme and with local junior, amateur and youth development teams.
- 5 Any support arrangements with the Senior club will be necessarily constrained by the budgets available for this purpose.

### **Other Sports.**

- 1 Inverclyde wishes to promote a diversity of sports provision including rugby, hockey, and other team sports where there is a sustainable club structure and clear pathways to participation.
- 2 The above principles apply in respect of support and access for such sports.

### **Equalities.**

- 1 The Council seeks to encourage equality of access irrespective of gender, and may provide specific or additional support to those clubs or organisations providing opportunities for access to women and girls.

The Council and its partners may agree a reduced rate for off peak access to facilities where there is low demand and this will be incorporated into the Council's fees and charges book.

Any failure to pay or failure to observe the conditions of access including any resulting from a waivers or concessionary scheme, may result in suspension of access in whole or in part until such matters are resolved to the satisfaction of Inverclyde Council.

It shall be a condition of any funding agreement that the financial support of Inverclyde Council shall be acknowledged in all promotional material, match programmes, match reports etc., The prominence of this acknowledgment shall be commensurate with the financial support provided. Specific requirements will be detailed in the relevant funding agreement.

Where specific financial support is offered to any club it shall be dependent on the submission and approval of a three – five year development plan, demonstrating the sustainability and growth of the club through, for example, increasing non-player membership and community involvement (including volunteering opportunities), planned fund raising and sponsorship. The key performance indicators identified in the development plan will form the basis of the funding agreement and will demonstrate a reduction in the club's dependence on public subsidy over the term of the plan.

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## Appendix 1a – Proposed Pitch Charges 2015-16

*n.b. the charges below are as adjusted to bring Inverclyde Council's charges in line with those already approved by Inverclyde Leisure. It is recognised that a review of the charges is required to ensure that benchmarking is up to date and that fees are at an affordable level while still meeting the needs of this policy. It is proposed that a review will be carried out early in the new financial year.*

<b>Charge Details</b>	<b>Charge 2015/16</b>
Grass Pitch – Adult with changing	£36
Grass Pitch – Adult without changing	£28.50
Grass Pitch – Juvenile* with changing	£18.50
Grass Pitch – Juvenile without changing	£14.25
Parklea Stadium Pitch with stand & facilities**	£185
Ravenscraig Stadium – Pitch with stand & facilities**	£185
Ravenscraig Stadium – track use 2 hours	£40
<b>Synthetic Pitches</b>	
Adult 7's (1/3) pitch 30 mins	£19
Adult half pitch 30 mins	£25
Adult full pitch 1 hour	£65
Juvenile 7's 30 mins	£11.50
Juvenile half pitch 30 mins	£17.25
Juvenile full pitch 1 hour	£40
MUGA	£18.50
Changing only (per team)	£11.50
Cricket – Adult with Changing	£48.50
Cricket - Adult without changing	£41
Cricket – Juv with changing	£21.25
Cricket – Juv without changing	£15

\* Juvenile rates for pitches apply to Under 19s in line with the Council's waiver policy

\*\* Applies where user charges entry

# All charges for synthetic pitches are inclusive of floodlights and changing



## **Appendix 1b: Inverclyde Council Under 19 Pitch Waiver Scheme and detailed allocation policy.**

*n.b. The policy below contains the specific rules applicable for clubs to be eligible for Under 19 sports waivers together with the detailed allocation rules as approved by the Education & Communities Committee on 11 March 2014 and 6 May 2014. The policy will be reviewed following the first years operation.*

To be eligible for the Councils free pitch use, including the use of indoor halls for sporting purposes for under 19s clubs must comply with all aspects of the General Pitch Letting Policy. The additional conditions apply to clubs seeking access to the scheme:

### **1. Co-operation with football development/sports development**

All clubs seeking access to the free pitch use scheme must be registered with the relevant governing body and be working with Inverclyde Council and the governing body in progressing in any applicable club development programme. In the case of football this would be the SFA Quality Mark Scheme. Clubs are expected to begin this process in the first year of the scheme coming into operation and thereafter to either show progress in advancing through the scheme or, where applicable, to maintain their status.

### **2. New clubs seeking to join the Scheme**

Any club or organisation seeking to join the scheme after the new scheme commences in season 2014-15 will be ineligible to join in the course of the year. Applications from new clubs will be considered at the beginning of each season following submission of all relevant documentation including an assessment of the clubs potential to progress towards any relevant club accreditation scheme.

### **3. Suspension from the Scheme**

Any club failing to comply with all relevant conditions in the course of the year may either be suspended from the scheme immediately, in the case of major non-compliance, or may have its eligibility reviewed at the end of the season in the case of continuing non-compliance.

### **4. Club Debt**

No club with outstanding historic debt for pitch or hall hire will be eligible for the scheme.

### **5. Payment**

All pitch and hall hire will be payable in advance by participating clubs. Payment of the grant to cover pitch hire will be made one month in arrears. Payment will be made in 10 monthly payments up to the maximum level the club is eligible for based upon the agreed formula. To reflect the fact that club bookings are not constant through the season and to assist clubs in cash flow, payment in any one month may vary up to 150% of the average payment value. Payment will not exceed in any month the value of bookings made and, once the club has reached the

maximum value allowable in the season no further payment will be made. For football clubs the season is taken to be August – May, for other sports an equitable equivalent split will be made on the basis of the structure of the sporting season. Clubs may obviously book facilities beyond their allowance but no payments will be made under the scheme beyond that allowance.

## 6. Club Membership

The free access to pitches scheme is for the benefit of the young people and sporting community of Inverclyde. As such any club seeking access to the scheme must have a minimum of 70% of its membership residing in Inverclyde. Clubs will be required to provide detailed membership records on demand to allow for this condition to be checked.

It is recognised that any scheme basing an allowance of free use on numbers of players is potentially open to manipulation. Any club found to be knowingly falsely registering players will be suspended from the scheme forthwith and will not be eligible to reapply that season.

## 7. Uniformed Organisations

The rules applying to sports clubs for free pitch use are designed for clubs taking part in formal leagues under the auspices of external governing bodies. Leagues internal to certain uniformed groups, for example Boys Brigade Football Leagues, will not meet the criteria for this scheme. Such groups will however remain eligible for free use under the waiver applying to uniformed groups subject to them following all relevant pitch letting conditions. Free use for such organisations will, however, only be available at pitches or halls under Inverclyde Council's direct control, not in facilities managed by Inverclyde Leisure.

# Club Allocations - Football

## 11 a side

**Training** – 1/3 of a pitch for three hours per week for 40 weeks

Number of Registered Players aged 12-18	<15	15-29	30-44	45-59	60-74	75-98	90-104
Equivalent Number of 11 a side Teams	<1	1	2	3	4	5	6
Hours 1/3 Pitch per week	0	3	6	9	12	15	18
Hours free pitch use per week* (Training)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

## Matchplay

Each team will receive all of their home league fixtures plus home drawn cup matches and 2 pre-season friendlies. League game allowances will obviously vary depending on league size.

No allowance will be made for matches originally drawn away but played in Inverclyde for reasons of pitch availability. These will be the responsibility of the away team from outside Inverclyde.

## 7 a side

**Training** – 1/3 of a pitch for three hours per week for 40 weeks

Number of Registered Players	<9	9-27	28-54	55--81	82-108	109-135	136--162
Expected Number of 7a side Teams Registered	<1	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	13-15	16-18
Hours 1/3 Pitch per week	0	3	6	9	12	15	18
Equivalent Hours Full Pitch	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

## Matchplay

Teams will play in League Central Venues in Inverclyde where available for their age group. These teams will receive an allowance to cover their element of the pitch hire of the venue.

Teams for which a Central Venue is not available will receive an allowance to cover their home games. As with 11-a side allowances this will vary depending on the number of teams in their league.

No allowances will be available for matches played outside Inverclyde.

## 4/5 a side

Training – 1/3 of a pitch for two hours per week for 40 weeks

Number of Registered Players	<12	12-36	37-72	73--108	109--144	144-180
Expected Number of 4 a side Teams Registered	<2	2-6	7-12	13-18	19-24	25-30
Hours 1/3 Pitch per week	0	2	4	6	8	10
Equivalent Hours Full Pitch	0	2/3	1 1/3	2	2 2/3	3 1/3

### Matchplay

Teams will play in League Central Venues in Inverclyde where available for their age group. These teams will receive an allowance to cover their element of the pitch hire of the venue.

No allowances will be available for matches played outside Inverclyde.

### Soccer Centres (Academies)

A number of teams run academies. It is possible for these to be registered with SYFA as “Soccer Centres” but they are all run on different lines. Clubs running academies or other initiatives which do not naturally fall into the scheme above (e.g. YAC summer 7s programme) will be expected to register these where possible as Soccer Centres. Discussions will then be had with the individual clubs about appropriate allowance.