

**To: Leadership Board**

**On: 4 December 2024**

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**Report by: Director of Environment, Housing and Infrastructure**

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**Heading: Artificial pitches - £800k budget allocation**

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## **1. Summary**

1.1 At the Council meeting on 29 February 2024, £0.800m was allocated to improve artificial playing surfaces across Renfrewshire.

1.2 The wording of the allocation stated:

*“Recognising the importance of outdoor play and sports, commit £0.800 million to the provision of artificial playing surfaces through investment in sports facilities and through match funding bids for financial support from external grant providers; with a report on the allocation of funding to specific projects being the subject of a future report to the Leadership Board”.*

1.3 Work has been undertaken over this period to understand what the fund is to be used for and for discussions with partners including OneRen and Sportscotland. This also includes work undertaken to commission work to understand and identify the location and usage of pitches across Renfrewshire.

1.4 This paper outlines the grant criteria for funding to be awarded, the Governance around the allocation of the fund, and the proposed launch of the fund.

1.5 It should be noted that the grant funding is to be used by external organisations on land that they either own or have a long-term lease and the funding is not to be used on Council run facilities e.g. lifecycle upgrades of existing pitches.

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## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Leadership Board:
- (i) Approves the grant funding criteria noted below in Section 4;
  - (ii) Notes that a future paper will come to this Board outlining any proposed projects that would be eligible for grant funding.
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## **3. Background and Governance**

- 3.1 To assist with the assessment of the grant applications, these will be discussed at the Officer Group (Sustainable Communities Fund) before being taken back to the Leadership Board for final approval. The Renfrewshire Council grant application form will be used for applications to ensure consistency with other grant funds.
- 3.2 It should be noted that the £0.800m funding is not time barred and will carry forward into 2025/26 to allow it to be distributed appropriately.
- 3.3 These funds have to be used as match funding for organisations to bid into, in the anticipation that additional funding is going to become available from the SFA or Sportscotland.
- 3.4 Renfrewshire Council/OneRen are not aware of any organisation that have a “shovel ready” project at this time, however, the Council is aware of several organisations who have made significant progress to date in developing proposals. It is hoped that this funding can assist in acting as a lever for obtaining further additional funding.
- 3.5 This funding should be used on land owned or leased by the organisation. It cannot be used on existing Renfrewshire Council core land e.g. schools and should not be used as a replacement for lifecycle maintenance of the current provision of artificial pitches.
- 3.6 As part of the £0.800m allocation, Officers have procured a consultant to review the current provision of pitches, review the usage and access across the whole of Renfrewshire to provide a better understanding as to where the criteria is met in Section 4.2, to ensure the appropriate provision across Renfrewshire.
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## 4. Criteria

4.1 The following criteria will be set for the Renfrewshire Artificial Pitches Grant Fund.

4.1.1 Renfrewshire Council has almost £800,000 to invest and award to relevant constituted groups/charities/organisations to support local grassroots sports organisations/clubs to deliver 'new build' artificial pitches. These will be fully managed and operated by the applicant's organisation.

4.1.2 Applications may be awarded up to the sum of £400,000. Applicants must have funds (or be actively seeking funds) that is match funding (or very close to) for this grant.

4.1.3 Artificial pitches (which may be from a range of durable types) will be awarded from this funding stream. Fencing, goals, flood lights or associated structures/accessories may be considered as part of this fund, however, wherever possible, these should be funded from an alternative source. There must be evidence that the works will increase the provision of use in Renfrewshire.

### 4.2 **Factors your project needs to demonstrate when you apply for the funding:**

4.2.1 Positive Impact:

- You have identified the community need and support for your project, as well as clearly showing the benefits your project will bring.
- You can clearly explain the impact your project will have and how you will know whether you have achieved benefits.

4.2.2 Strategic fit with the fund objectives and criteria:

- Your project meets some or all of the fund objectives - the strongest projects will meet the greatest number of objectives.
- Your project supports the strategic priorities of Renfrewshire Council and Renfrewshire Community Planning Partnership.
- Your project is complementary to existing facilities and provisions in the local area and does not duplicate existing provision where unmet need or demand from the local community cannot be demonstrated.

4.2.3 Project is viable and sustainable:

- You can demonstrate how your project is financially viable.
- Your organisation has the appropriate skills experience and qualifications and access to the resources required to deliver the project and to sustain the benefit or has a plan for engaging people and accessing the resources required.

- Your organisation has suitable governance arrangements in place for the scale of the project and has clear succession plans in place for the recruitment of Board members or trustees.
- Your organisation has the agreement of the landowner and the relevant permissions and licenses in place to allow the project to be delivered.
- You have or are arranging a feasibility study.

#### 4.2.4 Good working relations:

- You can demonstrate that you are able to develop and sustain good working relationships with others.
- You have a commitment to partnership working.

#### 4.2.5 Value for money and additional funding:

- You are able to demonstrate value for money.
- You are able to identify and secure other funding sources to support the development of your project, including the leveraging of additional funding into Renfrewshire.
- You are able to demonstrate the appropriate plan/funding available for on-going repairs and lifecycle maintenance.

### 4.3 **Fund Objectives**

- Pitches may facilitate multi-sport activities (if possible) and be open and available for communities to access at weekends and evenings.
- Sustainability, both environmental and financial, should be at the core of the project.
- That the local community support the delivery of improved community provision for sports and are aware of the distinct community benefits.
- Increase levels of external funding delivered into Renfrewshire from partner sports funders.
- Strengthen capacity in Renfrewshire - increasing participation in sports.
- Pitches will be fully inclusive and should be able to be used in all weather conditions.
- New pitches must be on land already secured by the applicant, or a community asset transfer well underway.

4.3.1 Failure to complete the works proposed as outlined within the application will result in the withdrawal of funding.

### 4.4 **How we'll assess your application:**

- Identified need for your project.
- The impact your project will have.
- How you will measure if it has made a positive change.
- How your project will work with existing local facilities and services.

- How your project will be environmentally and financially sustainable
- Confirmed sources of external funding.
- Sustainability – on-going repairs and maintenance

#### 4.5 **How much can I apply for:**

4.5.1 This grant funding is being awarded to hopefully assist with match funding to complete projects. It is not for starter projects e.g. feasibility studies to get a project started and off the ground.

- £100,000 - £200,000 – medium allocation
- £200,000 - £400,000 – large allocation

4.5.2 Successful applications will be approved by Renfrewshire's Leadership Board for approval following discussion at the Grants Approval panel – a sub-group of the Sustainable Communities Fund.

#### 4.6 **How to apply for the Artificial Pitch Fund:**

4.6.1 What Information we need:

- basic information about your organisation and it's governance arrangements.
- a detailed description of your project including timelines.
- which tier of funding you're applying for.
- the costs associated with your project.
- the outputs and outcomes of your project and how these will be measured.

4.6.2 What supporting evidence we need:

- a bank statement less than 3 months old.
- a copy of most recent Annual Accounts or Income and Expenditure Statement. These should be less than 15 months old, dated and signed as approved. You can provide a link to an OSCR or Companies House submitted file.
- if you're a new organisation, you should submit estimates of income and expenditure for the first 12 months.
- a signed, dated copy of the organisation's Constitution or Memorandum and Articles of Association. You can provide a link to an OSCR or Companies House submitted file.
- any other relevant reports or information to support your application as supporting evidence, including media coverage, press cuttings, images, past publicity materials, reviews and letters of support, consultation carried out and results to evidence support of community, results of any surveys or professional opinion sought, business case or

plan. This information should be submitted in electronic format where possible.

- 4.6.3 All grant applications should be completed using the standard Renfrewshire Council grant application form.
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## 5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Following approval at the Leadership Board, the proposal is to launch the fund to assess if there are any suitable organisations that are currently looking to upgrade/improve or develop an artificial surface where they currently have match funding.
- 5.2 Officers from Renfrewshire Council and OneRen will engage with existing organisations, discuss the criteria and the aim of the grant funding.
- 5.3 To assist with the match funding, Officers will assess the level of funding available for organisations and communities e.g. SFA, Sportscotland and discuss with partners to try and level money into Renfrewshire for these upgrades.
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## Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – There is £0.800m allocated for improvements to artificial pitches and this resides with Corporate Services until allocated to projects.
2. **HR & Organisational Development - None**
3. **Community/Council Planning –**
  - *Place* – Working with clubs, organisations and communities to improve artificial surfaces and facilities will enhance wellbeing across our communities.
4. **Legal - None**
5. **Property/Assets** – This paper outlines the criteria for grant funding, and whilst the paper doesn't currently have any implications, by issuing funding, the community assets will improve.
6. **Information Technology - None**
7. **Equality & Human Rights**
  - (a) The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative

impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

8. **Health & Safety - None**
9. **Procurement – N/A**
10. **Risk - None**
11. **Privacy Impact - N/A**
12. **COSLA Policy Position - N/A**
13. **Children's Rights - N/A**
14. **Climate Risk – N/A**

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#### **List of Background Papers**

None

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