

Action Plan
Speyside and Buckie Synthetic Turf
Pitches

Management and Operations
Procedures

1.0 Purpose

Following the approval of the Natural Grass and Synthetic Turf Pitches Strategy (2007-2012), this Action Plan intends to provide information relating to the management and operational procedures for the proposed Buckie and Speyside synthetic turf pitch developments.

This Action Plan intends to clarify the following:-

- Project Rationale (Section 2)
- External Hire Booking Procedure (Section 3).
- Pitch Maintenance Cycle (Section 4).
- Management Arrangements (Section 5).
- Pricing Rationale (Section 6)

For background information, it is suggested that the Action Plan should be read in conjunction with the Pitches Strategy.

2.0 Project Rationale

Once operational, the synthetic turf pitches at Speyside and Buckie will require to meet the needs of PE, Sports Development and Active Schools Staff in delivering a broad range of outdoor team sports and will also need to address the acute under-supply of quality football pitches in the Moray area.

Consistent with the principal of best value, both synthetic turf pitches will be dual purpose facilities that will be used by each respective School during the day-time and made accessible to the wider community during the evenings and weekends.

2.1 Description of Proposed Facilities

Each pitch development will consist of floodlighting, fencing and a 3rd generation synthetic turf carpet measuring 99.5m x 61m and, within these parameters, a playing area of 91.4m x 55m¹. The pitches will provide an excellent playing surface for 5 a-side and 11 a-side football matches and training but will also be suitable for multi-sport use including hockey and rugby training.

The project also incorporates the proposed development of community changing facilities at each school. These developments feature within the Educational Services Capital Plan and design drawings are in the process of being developed by the Council's Property Services Department. Prior to the future availability of either new or up-graded community changing facilities, steps will be undertaken to ensure that community access is given to school changing rooms as an interim measure.

2.2 Beneficiaries

As the first synthetic turf pitches to be operated by the Moray Council, and with limited access available to the 2nd generation pitches at RAF Kinloss, Lossiemouth and Gordonstoun School, it is expected that each pitch development will experience a high level of usage².

¹ The pitch will conform to the requirements outlined in the FA Guide "Artificial Grass Pitches for Community Use".

² Letters of support for the pitch developments have been submitted by the SFA North Region Manager, local football teams and PE Staff.

For both Buckie and Speyside Secondary Schools, each pitch development would be used on a daily basis by each respective Schools 841 and 472 pupils as part of the PE and Active School's curriculum and programme.

For local football clubs, the pitch developments will assist in developing the SFA player pathway and in particular the Soccer 7's initiative. The North Region Girls Football League Development Officer would also use the pitches to develop adult and youth female teams.

The pitches are also expected to be used for rugby and hockey training purposes.

2.3 Cost Estimate

The cost of each synthetic turf pitch development has been estimated as £507,000 and a stage 2 funding application for £200,000 has been submitted to sportscotland.

The cost of up-grading and providing changing facilities that are suitable for being made accessible to the local community has still to be estimated.

2.4 Milestones

Specialist consultants, Sports Labs Ltd were appointed in 2006 to assist Council Officers in developing performance specifications for a design and build option in relation to each pitch development and to undertake comprehensive site investigations at each proposed site.

The following outlines the project milestones that have been completed to date and the major milestones that are still to be addressed. Please note that the Council's Property Services Department will oversee the tendering and construction of this project.

Feasibility Phase

- Appointment of Consultant (complete)
- Site investigations undertaken by consultant (complete)

Pre-Construction Phase

- Consultation with relevant community stakeholders and clubs (complete)
- Performance specifications for a design and build option created (draft complete)
- Submission and approval of Planning Consent applicants (complete)
- Submission of Stage 1 application to sportscotland for the Buckie synthetic pitch (complete)
- Submission and approval of the Stage 2 Application (1st November deadline) to sportscotland for the Buckie pitch (Decision still pending)
- Tenders submitted for Buckie and Aberlour pitches (Mid March 2008)
- Lowest Tender verified and accepted (Mid April 2008)
- Building Warrants submitted for each pitch development (to be submitted in February)

Construction Phase

- Construction of Buckie and Aberlour Synthetic Turf Pitches Commences (June 2008)

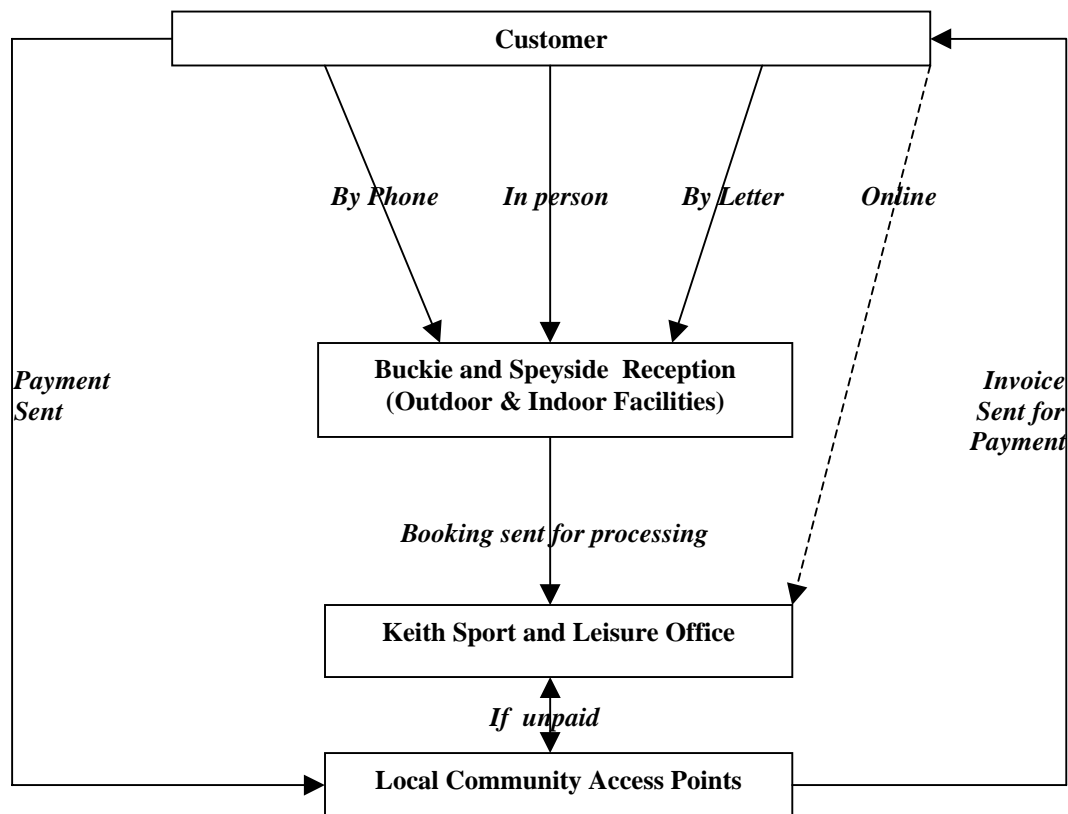
- Construction Completed. Buckie and Speyside Synthetic Turf Pitches are operational (September 2008)³

2.5 Conclusion

It should be noted that subject to Council approval, tendering for a design and build option is proposed to be undertaken in March 2008. Subject to Council approval, this would allow the construction of both pitch developments to be completed concurrently during the School Summer holidays. If there are no delays affecting the timeframe for this project, both pitches would be available for use by September 2008.

3.0 Pitch Booking Procedure

The following diagram illustrates the procedures that are currently in operation for taking pitch bookings. It is proposed to retain this system for the proposed synthetic turf pitches. An explanation of this diagram is given in paragraphs 3.1 to 3.4.



3.1 Channels of Communication

The customer has the choice of making their booking either by telephone, in person or by letter at the Buckie Leisure Centre Reception Office or at Community Reception Office at Speyside High School. Council is also at an advanced stage in developing an on-line booking system as part of the Council's Internet site (marked by dash line)⁴.

³ It is anticipated that the construction phase for the synthetic turf pitches would be 9 to 12 weeks.

⁴ It is anticipated that the online booking system will go 'live' by the end of 2008. In the meantime, Council IT Officers are currently in the process of providing up-dated pitch and booking information on the Council's website.

3.2 Receiving Bookings

Reception staff will receive bookings during normal opening hours (9am to 10pm).

3.3 Processing of Payments

Community bookings at Forres, Keith, Lossiemouth as well as for Buckie and Speyside are passed on to the Keith Sport and Leisure Office. Written confirmation is provided to the customer from this office and the hire details are then passed on to the Access Point in each area.

As noted in the diagram, the Access Point sends the payment invoice to the customer who can then make payment by way of various methods to any Access Point in Moray.

If the booking is unpaid, or if there is query, the Access Point will liaise with the Keith Sport and Leisure Centre to resolve this issue.

3.4 Conclusion

It is considered that the system in operation for hiring the existing Council grass pitches is fit for purpose. It is therefore the intention that the current operating procedures will be adopted for the community hire of the proposed synthetic turf pitches at Buckie and Speyside. Arrangements will be made to ensure that bookings can be made for a quarter, half as well as a full-sized pitch.

It is considered that once the online booking system is in operation this process will be further improved.

4.0 Synthetic Turf Maintenance Arrangements

It is acknowledged that the provision of a quality synthetic turf pitch does not stop with its installation. To ensure that a synthetic turf pitch retains its optimum playability and value it is necessary that an appropriate maintenance cycle is adopted.

Based on advice given by Sports Labs Ltd, the following tables outlines the maintenance tasks that will require to be undertaken by Council staff if the pitch is to retain its anticipated 10 to 15 year life cycle.

Frequency	Clean, and top up infill granules if required.	Mechanical Drag Brush (tractor pulled)	Rotating Brush (tractor pulled)	Revitalisation (De-compacting, top dress, replacement of lines)	Rejuvenation (Total Clean undertaken by a specialist contractor)
Daily	✓◆				
Weekly		✓◆			
Monthly			✓◆		
Annually				✓*	
Every five years					✓*

Key

◆ =Council Lands and Parks Staff * =Specialist Contractor

As noted above the maintenance cycle will require tasks to be undertaken on the following frequency by designated members of staff.

4.1 Daily

The topping up of the rubber infill granules, clearing the pitch of leaves, litter and debris will require to be undertaken on a daily basis.

4.2 Weekly and Monthly

To assist in maintaining the optimum playing surface, it will be necessary to brush the pitch carpet fibres on a weekly and monthly basis with the aid of specialist drag grooming brushes.

The Council's Lands and Parks Section, who also have overall responsibility for the up-keep of the Council's grass pitches, will undertake this task. It is considered that this additional work can be incorporated into the existing workload of the Council's Lands and Parks team.

4.3 Annually and Every 5 Years

On an annual basis it will be necessary for a specialist firm to be contracted to de-compact the carpet and renew the line markings. Every 5 years it will also be necessary that the carpet be thoroughly cleaned.

4.4 Conclusion

It is a common misconception that synthetic turf pitches require no maintenance. The above information, indicates that Council has considered the staffing implications of ensuring that the synthetic turf pitch is properly maintained and retains as much of its value as possible.

5.0 Management Structure

The following diagram illustrates the management structure for overseeing the Buckie and Speyside synthetic turf pitches.

Please note the roles and responsibilities of the following key members of staff in relation to this project.

5.1 Educational Resources Manager

Both the Sports Facilities Manager and the Leisure and Healthy Living Project share the same line Manager. The Educational Resources Manager has overall responsibility for Council Leisure facilities, including the synthetic turf pitch. The position holder also has a management responsibility for school janitorial staff.

5.2 Sports Facilities Manager

The Sports Facilities Manager has the day-to-day responsibility for managing the proposed facility. Both booking staff and supervisory staff report directly to this position. When required, the Sports Facilities Manager will also liaise with the Lands and Parks Officer to ensure that the synthetic turf pitch is properly maintained.

5.3 Senior Facilities Officer and Leisure Assistants

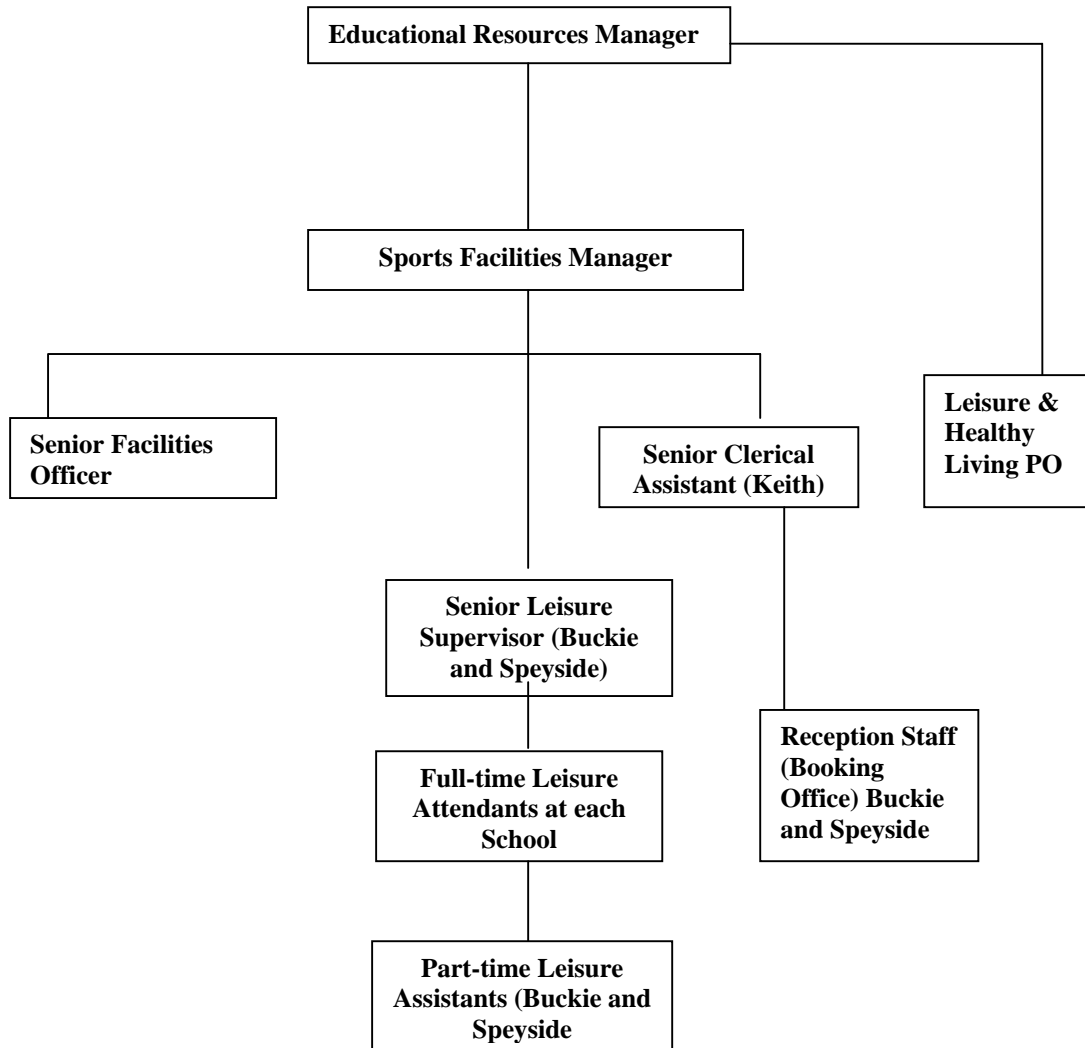
Leisure Assistants under the guidance of the Senior Facilities Officer will have responsibility for ensuring that the pitch compound is opened in the morning and secured at night.

5.4 Leisure and Healthy Living Project Officer

The Leisure and Healthy Living Project Officer will have responsibility for providing evaluation reports to Council and funding stakeholders as and when required.

5.5 Senior Clerical Assistant and Reception Staff

As identified in Section 3, Educational Services Staff at the Buckie, Speyside and Keith Community and Leisure offices have responsibility for taking and processing pitch bookings. These members of staff report to the Sports Facilities Manager.



5.6 Conclusion

The existing management structure has a clear chain of command under the Sports Facilities Manager. It is therefore considered fit for purpose in terms of overseeing and managing the proposed synthetic turf pitches at Buckie and Speyside.

6.0 Pricing Rationale

Using the existing pricing policy for the community hire of grass pitches as the starting point, it is proposed that Council run synthetic turf pitches are designed to breakeven. The community charges at the following rates of hire are proposed for a 90 minute booking.

Multi-sport Area	Adult	Junior (Under 16) / Discretionary
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Full Pitch (including pavilion hire)	£27.40 to £34.10	£13.30 to £20.00
½ Pitch (including pavilion hire)	£13.70 to £17.05	£ 6.65 to £10.00
¼ Pitch (including pavilion hire)	£6.86 to £8.53	£3.33 to £5.00
An estimated addition charge of £4.50- £13.00 would also be made to cover the cost of floodlighting for bookings in the evenings. The cost would depend on the duration of use.		

Running, operational and the cost of the future replacement of the synthetic turf carpet has been considered in determining these charges.

6.1 Conclusion

A competitor analysis would indicate that, if adopted, these charges would remain extremely competitive compared to other local authority and commercial operators.

Prepared by: -
Robin Paterson
Leisure & Healthy Living Project Officer
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