

**REPORT TO: EDUCATION & SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE ON
13 FEBRUARY 2007**

**SUBJECT: ACTION PLAN FOR SPEYSIDE & BUCKIE SYNTHETIC TURF
PITCHES**

BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to request that Committee notes and approves the Action Plan in relation to the proposed synthetic turf pitches at Buckie High School and Speyside High School.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section D (13) of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to dealing with the management of indoor and outdoor facilities operated by the Council for recreational, sporting, cultural and social activities.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that Committee:-

- (i) notes the Action Plan that outlines the operational and management procedures in relation to the proposed synthetic turf pitches at Speyside High School and Buckie High School;**
- (ii) approves the Action Plan for the proposed synthetic turf pitches at Buckie High School and Speyside High School.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At the Education and Social Services Committee on 3 October 2007, members approved the Natural Grass and Synthetic Turf Pitches Strategy for Moray (2007-2012), (para. 10 of the minute refers).
- 3.2 It was also agreed that separate action plans relating to the individual projects identified within the strategy would be submitted to this Committee for approval once they had reach an appropriate stage of development (*para 2.1 (ii) of the report refers*).
- 3.3 Members will be aware that one of the objectives of the Natural Grass and Synthetic Turf Pitches Strategy was “ to develop five 3rd generation synthetic turf pitches, and associated changing facilities, at Buckie, Keith, Speyside, Forres Secondary Schools and Elgin High School” (Natural Grass and Synthetic Turf Pitches Strategy (2007-2013), p18).
- 3.4 The document outlined the intention to phase the development of these facilities over the 5-year period of the Strategy. The installation of the Buckie and Speyside synthetic turf pitches would be undertaken in the period

2007/2008-2008/2009 and the pitches at Keith, Forres Secondary Schools and Elgin High School by 2010/11-2011/12.

- 3.5 The installation of the Buckie and Speyside pitches is included in the Educational Services Capital Plan submission for the years 2008/09 to 2009/10, Forres and Keith 2010/11 to 2011/12 and Elgin High 2012/13.
- 3.6 In-line with the Pitches Strategy, this report is concerned with the operational and management procedures for the first two of these proposed synthetic turf pitches at Buckie and Speyside Secondary Schools. It is the intention that further action plans for the remaining synthetic turf pitches will be submitted to this Committee when the projects have reached an appropriate stage of development.
- 3.7 The purpose of this report is therefore to request that Committee notes and approves the action plan for the proposed synthetic turf pitches to be located at Buckie High School and Speyside High School. A further report will be submitted to Full Council seeking approval to accept the lowest tender prior to the construction phase being undertaken.
- 3.8 Copies of the Site Plan (**Appendix 1a & 1b**) and the Action Plan, for both pitch developments, (**Appendix 2**) are attached as part of this report.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Development Plan/Community Plan/Service Improvement Plan

The proposed synthetic turf pitches form part of the Council's Leisure and Healthy Living capital build programme. The Moray Community Plan (2006-2010) recognises the significant community benefit to be derived from this programme and the Moray Community Planning Partnership Natural Grass and Synthetic Turf Pitches Strategy (2007-2012) has also identified the need to provide synthetic turf pitches to be shared by schools and the wider community.

(b) Policy and Legal

The provision of high quality sport and recreation provision is not only an integral part of the Council's strategy for the development of quality sport and recreation facilities in Moray but is also a national priority. In particular, the proposed synthetic turf pitches aim to fulfil the aspirations for quality grass roots recreation provision, leading to increased levels of physical activity and health, as identified as a key objective in Sport 21 (The National Strategy for Sport 2003-2007) and sportscotland's Reaching Higher: Building on the Success of Sport 21.

(c) Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)

4.1 Financial

Both synthetic turf pitch developments will be considered as part of the Educational Services Capital Plan submission for the 5 years 2008/09-2013/14. A budget allocation of £600,000 and £550,000 has been allocated in the Plan in respect to the cost of constructing the Speyside and Buckie pitches and the provision of community changing room accommodation over two financial years 2008/09 and 2009/10.

The proposed cost of each synthetic turf pitch (including floodlighting and fencing) has been estimated as £507,000. Cost estimates for the construction or the upgrading of school changing facilities for community use has still to be determined.

A stage 2 funding application for £200,000 has been submitted to sportscotland for the Buckie synthetic turf pitch development. The outcome of this application is anticipated to be known by the end of January 2008.

It is proposed that the revenue costs for each pitch development will be met by the charges set.

4.2 **Risk**

A failure to secure external funding support has been identified as a major risk affecting the viability of the pitch developments. As noted above, it is thought that a decision concerning the sportscotland application for the Buckie synthetic turf pitch will be known by the time of this committee meeting. Members will therefore be in a position to assess the financial viability of the project.

In terms of operational costs, the Action Plan identifies the cost of replacing the synthetic turf carpet as being approximately £150k. If properly maintained, the carpet can be expected to have a lifecycle of 10 to 15 years. Officers will therefore ensure that an appropriate maintenance cycle is in place to minimise the risk that the carpet needs to be prematurely replaced. As noted in the action plan, charges will also be set at an appropriate rate to meet the costs of replacing the synthetic turf carpet in 10 years.

4.3 **Staffing**

The Action Plan proposes that duties relating to the maintenance, operation and management of the synthetic turf pitches will be absorbed into the existing workload of Council staff. There are therefore no additional staffing implications arising from this report.

4.4 **Property**

Full planning consent for the construction of synthetic turf pitches, fencing and flood lighting at Buckie and Aberlour has been secured. Members should note that due to the proximity of the pitch to residential housing at Aberlour, the

operation of flood lighting has been restricted to 9.00pm Monday to Friday and 8.00pm on Saturday and Sunday.

4.5 **(d) Consultations**

In preparing this report consultations have been undertaken with Deborah Brands, Principal Accountant, Principal Planning Officer, Sports Facilities Manager, Active Schools Project Manager, Property Manager, Alasdair McEachan, Senior Solicitor, Rectors of Speyside and Buckie High Schools, Lands and Parks Officer, Head of Estates Services, Senior Sports Development Officer, Educational Resources Manager, Education Senior Management Team and the Chief Executive and, where received, their comments have been incorporated within this document.

5. **CONCLUSION**

5.1 **The Committee is asked to note and approve the Action Plan for the Speyside and Buckie synthetic turf pitch developments.**

Authors of Report: Robin Paterson (Leisure and Healthy Living Project Officer).
Background Papers: Contained within the Educational Services File.
Ref: DMD/JR/Reports/Ed & Soc Serv Com/13 February 2008/ Action Plan for Speyside and Buckie Synthetic Turf Pitches