

2024/25 Pitch and Outdoor Space Strategy

Appendix 3 – Customer Facing Strategy

Pitch and Outdoor Space Strategy Update

The Live Life Aberdeenshire Pitch and Outdoor Space was last reviewed in June 2021. This update builds on work done previously which considers playing surface availability and condition, and shifts focus to the lived experiences of Clubs who use Council operated surfaces throughout Aberdeenshire.

Club Survey – April 2024

A Club survey was undertaken in April 2024 and covered key themes of bookings and administration, pitch access, user group involvement and community empowerment through Clubs.

The full set of results can be found at the end of this summary.

Key takeaways:

- Clubs want to associate with a ‘home’ pitch
- Pavilions are deemed essential where there is one, reinforcing this identity
- Clubs see pitch user groups as the primary mechanism to sorting out fixture conflicts and usage prioritisation.
- Clubs want to play on the best surfaces available within 15mins of their town
- There is a strong will to work with Aberdeenshire Council to learn more about looking after grass pitches.
- The less admin, the better!

As such, our aims and objectives for 2024/25 are detailed below and can be summarised as;

1. To reengage with Clubs and PUGs in a realistic and consistent manner.
2. To listen to feedback and prioritise the needs of the end user.
3. To create a standardised process for pitch hire and administration across the three services of LLA, Education Lets, and Landscape Services.

4. To revisit the aspirational capital plan and evaluate its priorities in line with budget setting timelines and informed on a place based approach.
5. To remove barriers to accessing facilities currently unavailable for hire.

Service Aims and Milestones for 2024/25

Q1 (April – June)	Q2 (July – Sept)	Q3 (Oct – Dec)	Q4 (Jan – March)
Engagement with Clubs via Pitch and Outdoor Space Survey	Act on the recommendations following Communities Committee	Integrate bookings teams	Constructively review the performance of the integrated bookings team.
Collate the results of the survey and draft 2024/25 service strategy	Re-establish Pitch User Groups (PUGs)	Identify available spaces on all weather pitches and discuss priorities with PUGs	Celebrate good practices and shine
Present findings and recommendations at the June Communities Committee	Launch bookings window and start to take bookings	Look for location specific barriers to access and map out route to removing these	Identify gaps in surface provision, or quality concerns
Collate let's process with education lets and landscape services	Create a 'one point of contact' mechanism for Clubs	Create a dedicated landing page (web) for all outdoor pitch bookings	Review financial and usage performance of the pitches by location
Introduce ability to pay monthly for long lets	Reach out to Clubs who have shown interest in maintaining grass surfaces	Identify mechanisms for releasing small pockets of funding to support Club	Plan 2025/26 priorities, including any potential capital spend requirements
Introduce a bookings window aligned to all services	Engage with PPP facilities with the aim of increasing pitch availability		
Introduce an incentive for year-round bookings			