

Dunoon Playing Fields and Sports Stadium

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Dunoon benefits from a comprehensive outdoor sports facility comprising of a running track, stadium, 4 x 5 a-side all-weather pitches (cages) which are currently leased out until September 2015, and a number of grass pitches. Various arrangements are in place for the use of the facility but there is currently no overall management plan for the coordination of the site.

As part of an agreement reached between Argyll & Bute Council and Dunoon 5s, arrangements were put in place in summer 2014 to allow the cages facility in the Black Park to be run until September 2015.

This arrangement was for one year only to allow both the council and the club the chance to explore options for future management of the facility and the site as a whole.

It is proposed that discussions take place between ABC, user groups, stakeholders and any other interested groups to understand their requirements and expectations in relation to the stadium. In order to put in place arrangements that cover the holistic use of the facility it is proposed that a local consultation is carried and that a comprehensive management plan be developed for the whole site. This will include bringing forward proposals for the future management of the 5 a-side options.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Members note the contents of this report and agree to a consultation exercise being carried out to work towards a holistic management arrangement for the facility as a whole.

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3.0 SUMMARY

- 3.1 The purpose of this report is to provide further details to Members with regards to options for operating the five-a-side all weather pitches and other facilities at Dunoon Stadium.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 That Members note the contents of this report and agree to a consultation exercise being carried out to work towards a holistic management arrangement for the facility as a whole.

5.0 DETAIL

- 5.1 This report provides update on the current lease arrangement at the cages facility within the Black Park and the options being considered for future management of the facility.
- 5.2 A&BC and Dunoon 5s representatives have recently discussed the current arrangement at the Stadium and are keen to explore future options for the cages and Dunoon Stadium facility in general.
- 5.3 An agreement between A&BC and Dunoon 5s was reached in 2014 due to concerns that the Cages facility was been underutilised and the group who had run the facility for over a decade prior to this had made it clear they wanted to cease their lease agreement with the council. It was also clear that there had been a lack of investment in the facility and a sinking fund that was agreed as part of the lease with the previous lease had not been put in place to carry out maintenance at the Cages.
- 5.4 Dunoon 5s advise that there has been a steady uptake at the Cages since taking up the lease with several user groups taking advantage of the all-weather pitches to Inc.:- The Dunoon Help Programme / Kyles Athletic Shinty Club / Dunoon Shinty / Dunoon Athletic FC / Dunoon Youth Football League / Morrison's Supermarket and other local businesses.

- 5.5 As part of a wider consultation, various Sports Clubs including Cowal Rugby Club / Cowal Ladies Shinty / Dunoon Amateurs FC & Dunoon Athletic FC had arranged a meeting with the Dunoon Councillors to discuss the options at the stadium around the middle of March. This was to discuss the wider use of the stadium facility and options going forward for the User Groups at the stadium.
- 5.6 A&BC Community Services Department have indicated that funding is in place to allow their Sports Hub Officer to visit Dunoon in September to open up discussion on sports provision / facilities in Dunoon, this will give clubs an opportunity to meet round the table with a view to creating a Dunoon Sports Hub that can consider the options for future sports provision in the area. This could encompass the stadium in its entirety with options to create athletics / cycling to take advantage of the red blaes track that surrounds the main pitch and look to introduce a wider range of sports at the stadium. This would facilitate the development of a holistic management plan for the site as a whole.
- 5.7 The current lease at the Cages is due to end on 31st Aug 2015; Dunoon 5s have indicated that they are keen to be part of any future discussions regarding both the running of the Cages and wider stadium facility. The council have supported the group over the last year in terms of financial support. It is understood that the facility now runs and operates at a level that meets the demands of all user groups at the stadium, it is recommend that an interim lease agreement between the council and Dunoon 5s be extended on a monthly basis to allow the Sports Hub Officer to engage with user groups with a view to looking at the cages facility and wider stadium use. As part of any extension to the lease, the council would seek confirmation with Dunoon 5s that no further payment will be made to subsidise the running of the facility. On this basis the lease holder will run the facility and fund the personnel at the Cages. A&BC will continue with the maintenance agreement in the short-term until a long term plan for the facility is agreed via the Sports Hub Officer, Amenity Services, Social Enterprise Department and local User Groups.
- 5.8 The outcome of the consultation and firm recommendations for future operation will be reported back to Area Committee at its December meeting.
- 5.9 As part of any long term plan for the wider stadium facility, it will be necessary to lay out clear Users Guidelines in terms of pitch usage / maintenance and booking slots etc. this should form part of any discussions and look to engage with as many sports organisations as possible.
- 5.10 A&B council currently employ one full time member of staff within the stadium and it is that person's responsibility to ensure upkeep of pitches and surrounding areas are to an acceptable standard and playing surfaces are kept in good order to allow continued use. The

stadium at present has 3 main pitches and user groups, namely: -
Black Park (Football/Shinty training) Stadium Pitch (Football/Shinty)
Top park (Rugby) See attached plan - Appendix 1

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 It is understood that the facility is operating well and that general feedback from the lease holder and user groups are positive. This report recommends that we consult with as many sports groups as possible to develop a holistic management plan for the stadium and identify arrangements for managing the cages and the wider site in the future. In the interim the existing lease is extended on a monthly basis without financial support from A&BC. This will allow the Sports Hub Officer to engage with interested parties and to bring proposals back for Member's consideration in December 2015.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Policy: Potential Third Sector Transfer Support
- 7.2 Financial: Future implications to Amenity Services
- 7.3 Legal: Asset transfer of facility/Minute of Agreement
- 7.4 HR: N/A
- 7.5 Equalities: N/A
- 7.6 Risk: Long term financial sustainability of facility should the existing ad hoc arrangements continue. Provision of a holistic management arrangement for the facility in its entirety and the various user groups will help to provide a sound frame work under which the facility can be run in the future.
- 7.7 Customer Service: N/A

Policy Lead Cllr E Morton.

Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure Services

May 2015

For further information contact: Jim Smith, Head of Roads and Amenity Services

Appendix One: Plan of stadium layout.