

Meeting of:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	22 SEPTEMBER 2026
Report Title:	3G PITCH IMPROVEMENT PROJECT 2026-2027
Report Owner: Responsible Chief Officer / Cabinet Member	CORPORATE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES CABINET MEMBER COMMUNITIES & THE ENVIRONMENT
Responsible Officer:	MARTIN MORGANS, HEAD OF SERVICE – PUBLIC REALM
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	This report has no effect on the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.
Executive Summary:	The purpose of this report is to advise Cabinet of a proposed project to redevelop the existing 2G football pitch at Porthcawl Comprehensive School, leveraging external funding. This project aims to benefit both the school and the wider community. The report also seeks approval for Bridgend County Borough Council to enter into a suitable management agreement with the school for the ongoing management and maintenance of the facility, ensuring it supports our communities and the wellbeing of future generations.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to request Cabinet approval for Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) to enter into any necessary management agreements with Porthcawl Comprehensive School, for the management and maintenance of an upgraded 3G pitch for both school and community use.

2. Background

- 2.1 Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) has seen a substantial increase in the demand for artificial pitches across the borough, which has been determined through community engagement via the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Officer, the Green Spaces Department and as evidenced by the applications received in respect of the new pitch at Bryntirion Comprehensive School - expressions of interest were received from 17 groups, requesting a total of 226.5 hours of pitch time per week, which represents an excess of 187.5 hours per week and demonstrates demand of 581% of the available slots.

- 2.2 The feedback received has outlined issues around a lack of artificial and hybrid surfaces in the borough and noted competition for existing pitches between community clubs and commercial entities. Ongoing issues with ground conditions as a result of a particularly dry summer have also exacerbated this issue.
- 2.3 As a result, clubs have had to resort to travelling out of area to access suitable 3G facilities, thus impacting those who do not have access to transport, which has potentially contributed to a reduction in the number of people provided with opportunities for sport in the Borough.
- 2.4 The proposed project sits within the strategic context provided by the Cymru Football Foundation (CFF) Local Football Facilities Plan (LFFP) for Bridgend. The LFFP provides a strategic framework for future football facility investment by the CFF and has been informed by in-depth engagement with local partners, including BCBC (represented by colleagues in the CAT, Green Spaces and Wellbeing departments), the Football Association of Wales (FAW), local leagues and existing football clubs in the borough.

This plan identifies the priority projects required to either meet the growing demand for football or address challenges with the supply, accessibility or quality of existing facilities locally and consider the opportunities to deliver investment through various models. The completed LFFP for Bridgend is available to view here:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/d6655e346bf9430cb6da848874cfb46d>

- 2.5 The existing hockey pitch at Porthcawl Comprehensive School is currently only utilised by a small number of groups during after-school hours, due to its poor condition. The current environment and experiences of the existing pitch are poor, from both school and local community perspectives.
- 2.6 Following early consultation and approval given by representatives of the Education, Early Years and Young People directorate, Communities, Corporate Landlord, Public Realm and Social Services and Wellbeing Departments, it was confirmed that the project could be progressed and a meeting was held with the head teacher of Porthcawl Comprehensive School, with both the CAT Officer and Group Manager – Prevention and Wellbeing in attendance, where it was determined that the school wished to progress with the project, with the understanding that the school would ultimately enter into a management agreement similar to that as Bryntirion Comprehensive School, which has received in principle approval from the School governing body.

3. Current situation/ proposal

3.1 School Background

- 3.1.1 Porthcawl Comprehensive School is an English-medium 11-19 mixed comprehensive school maintained by Bridgend County Borough Council. There are 1,185 pupils on roll.

- 3.1.2 The school uses their existing pitch during school hours for PE sessions across all year groups. Outside of these hours, the school offers usage of the existing facilities for the community, but there is low take-up due to the poor condition of the facilities.

3.2 Proposed Project & Impact

- 3.2.1 The development of the proposed pitch at Porthcawl Comprehensive School will assist with the increased demand for artificial pitches for both football and rugby across the borough, through the winter season in particular.
- 3.2.2 The proposed facility at Porthcawl Comprehensive School will encompass:
- a new 7v7 3G pitch, including a shock pad.
 - Crossfield goals
 - Fencing to goal lines and touchlines
 - LED floodlights
 - There is also the potential for a dedicated walkway to be developed.
- 3.2.3 The relationship between the school and the local community will be built upon and the scheme developed wherever possible to benefit those who live in deprived areas throughout the borough. There is also an opportunity for women/girls only teams to access booking slots through partnership with local clubs.
- 3.2.4 It has been confirmed that the development can be progressed via permitted development, therefore, planning permission is not required. It has also been confirmed that Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) design and SuDS Approving Body (SAB) approval is not required for this project.

3.3 Project Funding Application

- 3.3.1 Following the approval given by the School Modernisation Board in May 2026, an application was submitted to the Cymru Football Foundation (CFF) and Sport Wales.

The bids were successful and therefore, the following funding has been secured for the development of the proposed pitch:

Porthcawl Comprehensive School

	Cymru football foundation	Sport Wales	BCBC Contribution	Total
Conditional Funding Awards	£241,473.00	£150,000.00	£0.00	£391,473.00

- 3.3.2 As a result of the conditional external funding applications, there is no current requirement for any funding from the local authority in respect of this project and confirmation has been received from the CFF that, in principle, they would absorb any increase in costs assuming the project remains financially viable as and when, over and above the partner funding ringfenced for this project.

3.4 Management Agreement

- 3.4.1 If approved by Cabinet, the intention is to finalise and enter into a management agreement with Porthcawl Comprehensive School, based on the successful model implemented at Bryntirion Comprehensive School (as approved by Cabinet in July 2025). The management agreement will consider and incorporate the following aspects:
- Maintenance of the pitch in line with CFF recommendations, as defined in the “**Artificial Grass Pitch (3G) Guidance (2025)**” documentation (**Appendix A**)
 - The establishment of an appropriate sinking fund ringfenced by BCBC from revenue generated for future resurfacing works at year 10.
 - Estimated plausible annual income from the hire of the pitch. These estimates are based on the LA-Subsidised rate hire fees as identified by the CFF in their published “Guide to current 3G prices” (**please see Annex C of Appendix A**), for the maximum usage during term time only. These fees are recommended in the aforementioned guide and are applicable across Wales. The annual maintenance figures used in this calculation are also included in the “Lifecycle and Annual Maintenance Cost” Guide provided by the CFF (**please see page 11 of Appendix A**) .
 - School usage/community usage hours - the pitches will be utilised by the school during operational hours for PE sessions and by the community during after-school hours, weekends and school holidays.
 - Monitoring, reporting and financial management controls to ensure the effective operation of the sinking fund which will be maintained by the Council to ensure oversight, with regular payments to be made as per a pre-agreed schedule.
- 3.4.2 The CAT Officer has previously developed a similar agreement in conjunction with the Legal and Finance departments. An example agreement was provided to Porthcawl Comprehensive School and the Group Manager – Prevention and Wellbeing on 14th May 2026, which was considered and approved in principle by the school governing body on 15th July 2026.
- 3.4.3 The operating arrangements for the school site will need to reflect the individual circumstances of the facility. In the case of Porthcawl comprehensive school, the need for additional caretaker capacity was discussed in person with the headteacher and the Group Manager – Prevention and Wellbeing on 8th May 2026 during the initial project proposal meeting and the costs of resourcing are accounted for in the financial model and projections outlined in **Appendix B**.
- 3.4.4 The Bryntirion example demonstrates that income generated through community use can contribute towards additional staffing capacity comfortably, with pitch income having supported the appointment of two additional caretakers.
- 3.4.5 Support and guidance has been provided to Bryntirion Comprehensive School regarding the development and implementation of a management committee and the establishment of a formal booking system. It is proposed that this same support be provided to Porthcawl Comprehensive School and the Finance Manager and

Headteacher at Bryntirion have offered to guide other schools with the requirements, following their own experience in this area.

3.5 Financial sustainability and charging

- 3.5.1 A key consideration for any 3G facility is the ability to generate sufficient income to support its operation, maintenance and longer-term lifecycle requirements.
- 3.5.2 The proposed approach and financial model has been informed by the research and development of the Bryntirion model as approved by Cabinet in July 2025, together with the CFF Artificial Grass Pitch Guidance (**Appendix A**).
- 3.5.3 The CFF guidance highlights the importance of ensuring that pitch income supports staffing and management, ongoing maintenance and provision for future carpet replacement. It also provides indicative charging levels for different types of facility and users. The proposed charges are broadly aligned with the relevant CFF guidance and the established approach.

The financial model considers:

- proposed hire charges
- staffing and management costs
- maintenance requirements
- sinking-fund provision
- future surface replacement

This will ensure that the facility has a sustainable operating model while maintaining affordable access for local clubs and community users.

3.6 Club affordability and community use

- 3.6.1 The proposed facility is intended to provide accessible opportunities for local clubs and community groups. Therefore, the charging structure is designed to balance affordability with the requirement to generate sufficient income to operate and maintain the facilities effectively.
- 3.6.2 The CFF guidance (**Appendix A**) provides a useful benchmark for this, while the experience at Bryntirion provides a local evidence base, which confirms that the charging model is appropriate and sustainable. To ensure that users from a variety of backgrounds can utilise the pitches, there is an expectation set out in the management agreement that any under utilised slots or availability should be offered to underprivileged groups.

3.7 Procurement procedure

- 3.7.1 The intention is for the CAT Officer to work with colleagues in the Procurement Department to prepare the necessary documentation in line with BCBC's Contract Procedure Rules for a tender exercise via Sell2Wales.

3.8 Overview

- 3.8.1 The proposed facilities represent a significant opportunity to improve football and community sports infrastructure within Bridgend, supported by external investment and informed by both local experience and the wider strategic priorities identified through the CFF Local Football Facilities Plan.

The project has benefited from early and ongoing engagement across Education Senior Management, Corporate, Wellbeing, Green Spaces and Corporate Landlord, as well as schools, sporting organisations and external partners.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, on socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh Language. It is therefore not necessary to carry out a full EIA on this policy or proposal.

5. Well-being of future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

- 5.1 This project assists in the achievement of the following well-being objectives under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:
- **Long Term** – Entering into a management agreement with the school will enable the maintenance and upkeep of newly-installed facilities in the short term, as well as providing provision for the resurfacing of the courts after 10 years, ensuring a high-quality facility is available for future generations.
 - **Prevention** – The School provides employment to local people and will work with established groups to provide a service appropriate for the local community. The agreement in relation to maintenance of the pitches would enable an experienced community-based school to ensure the safeguarding of the facilities for future generations and reduce the need for reliance on BCBC for the provision of this service in other locations across the borough.
 - **Integration** – Any income received by the school will be utilised for the maintenance and upkeep of the facilities, as well as resurfacing the pitch after 10 years, ensuring a high-quality facility is available for future generations. The inclusion of Welsh language has been considered, and a requirement of the agreement will include the need for communications to be provided bilingually where possible.
 - **Collaboration** – The School will work with local community groups and wider sports groups to ensure that a fit-for-purpose service is being provided with consideration to the needs of the local communities.
 - **Involvement** – The school will provide a number of booking slots specifically to encourage a diverse range of individuals in our community to participate in

sports sessions, ensuring an inclusive opportunity for these communities. The service will actively encourage its users to engage with the activities that take place within their community and support contact with friends, family and other members of the public. Through greater engagement individuals should be able to contribute to their communities for longer.

5.2 The proposed project aligns with the following **BCBC Wellbeing Objectives** as defined in the Corporate Plan 2023-2028:

- A County Borough with thriving valleys communities: *Improving community facilities and making them more accessible.*
- A County Borough where we help people meet their potential: *Modernising our school and sporting facilities.*
- A County Borough where people feel valued, heard and part of their community: *Helping community groups to take control of and improve their facilities to protect them for the future.*
- A County Borough where we support people to live healthy and happy lives: *Offering attractive leisure and cultural activities and improving children's play facilities and opportunities.*

5.3 This project also aligns with the following policies and strategies:

- **Cymru Football Foundation Impact Categories**, specifically:
 - Tackling Inequalities: Improving Quality of and Access to Facilities in Deprived Communities
 - Improved Experiences and Environments: Enabling Participation Growth and/or Retention.
 - Stronger and More Sustainable Community-Focused Clubs
 - Improving Facilities and Environments for Women and Girls
- **The Play Sufficiency Duty Wales**, particularly in relation to:
 - Matter C: Space available for Children to play.
 - Matter D: Supervised Provision

6. Climate Change and Nature Implications

6.1 There are no climate change or nature implications arising from this report and the recommendation to enter into a management agreement; however, the redevelopment of the facility itself will reduce the need for members of the community to travel to other authority areas, thus assisting in achieving the Council's Net Zero Carbon Strategy.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 There are no safeguarding or corporate parent implications arising from this report.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 The project will increase the availability of 3G facilities in the borough and enable the school to generate an income for the maintenance/management of the pitch, (including day-to-day maintenance, staffing and utilities), the establishment of a sinking fund and other school-related projects in connection with the purposes outlined above.
- 8.2 Based on the grant offers provided by the Cymru Football Foundation and Sport Wales, there is currently **no** capital implication to the authority for the development of these facilities.
- 8.3 In line with the Council's Financial Procedure rules, schemes for which external funding has been approved will be added to the capital programme once the funding has been accepted and included in the next capital programme report to Council.
- 8.4 Based on the projected calculations (shown at **Appendix B**) in relation to the income, projected maintenance costs and sinking fund requirements as outlined in the "Lifecycle and Annual Maintenance Cost" Guide provided by the CFF (**please see page 11 of Appendix A**), it is not anticipated that there will be any ongoing financial implication to the authority or the school, as the income from the hire of the facility would be retained and utilised by the Schools for the maintenance of the facility, staffing and utilities, and an agreed amount transferred to BCBC for retention in a ringfenced sinking fund for the purpose of resurfacing the pitch in the future.
- 8.5 The CFF have provided expected costs for maintenance of the proposed facility – as outlined in the "Lifecycle and Annual Maintenance Cost" Guide attached (**please see page 11 of Appendix A**) based on the prepared usage plan which indicates that the risk of the sinking fund being insufficient is low.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 Cabinet is requested to:
1. Consider the contents of this report and confirm approval of the project and the entering into of an appropriate management agreement.
 2. Delegate authority to the Corporate Director – Communities to negotiate the final terms of the management agreement in consultation with the Chief Officer Finance and the Director Education, Early Years and Young People to enter into the management agreement and any supplementary agreements and to grant any necessary consents required on behalf of the Council.

Background documents

None