

## REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

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meeting date: 9 MAY 2021  
title: RIBBLE VALLEY 3G (RV3G)  
submitted by: JOHN HEAP, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES  
principal author: MARK BEVERIDGE, HEAD OF CULTURAL AND LEISURE SERVICES

### 1 PURPOSE

1.1 To outline the impact that the pandemic has had on the site and provide an update for Committee on the way the use is developing.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities

- Corporate Priorities - To ensure a well-managed council providing efficient services based on identified customer needs.
- Community Objectives - To help make people's lives healthier and safer.
- Other Considerations - None

### 2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The site has been open since 23 September 2019. Although due to COVID 19 the site has only been open fully for 10 of the 20 possible months to date.

2.3 There have been three lockdowns plus Lancashire Football Association decision to suspend grassroots football, which collectively have severely impacted income for the facility.

2.4 Currently over 60 local teams train and play at the facility, the pitches and tennis courts are in use (when open) on average over 120 hours per month from a potential total of 332 hours. However, the total figure includes the weekday daytime which totals 140 hours per month, that is the hardest period to let out, which is why officers are working with groups to develop this aspect of use. In terms of the peak period 5pm to 10pm Monday to Friday, use has been running close to capacity.

2.5 The pitches are booked by our two local junior leagues which showcase the facility to all East Lancashire.

2.6 The site is now the home of Ribble Valley Raiders Cricket Club as their training venue who regularly since sessions have restarted are introducing 40+ young people a week into cricket. A special training mat was purchased to allow cricket to be played on the artificial surfaces.

2.7 The site has seen girls and women's football flourish with Ribble Valley 3G becoming an FA Wildcats approved centre.

2.8 The site is often used as a venue for many school competitions, organised by Hyndburn and Ribble Valley School Sports Partnership.

2.9 The fantastic paths around the site are being used to train people to ride their bikes through a local community interest company.

- 2.10 The FA are looking to deliver coaching courses from the Education Suite and pitches when covid restrictions allow.
- 2.11 The site has numerous organisations interested in delivery BTEC qualifications and making Ribble Valley 3G a hub for learning.
- 2.12 Weight management classes and healthy eating advice are being delivered by the Borough Council from the education suite.
- 2.13 The site is home to our local walking football teams and the Council staff are helping the club to grow to develop a walking football league across the North West.

### 3 ISSUES

- 3.1 It is clear from the usage figures despite the interruptions caused by Covid, that the facility is very busy at the peak times, where demand can outstrip the supply of space for certain times. This reinforces the assessment by Lancashire FA that the Borough could accommodate more community pitches.
- 3.2 Operation of the facility has been severely impacted because of the Covid-19 pandemic and this has also resulted in a direct financial impact through loss of income. Whilst this is the case, the Council is currently being partly compensated for lost income through the MHCLG Sales, Fees and Charges Compensation scheme. In addition, the council's overall budget includes a contingency for the balance of potential lost income from the impact of Covid-19.

### 4 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications

- Resources – The Covid-19 pandemic has had a direct financial impact on the service, but it is hoped that much of this will be covered by the Governments income compensation scheme and the corporate contingency for potential uncompensated lost income due to Covid-19 accurate budget figures will hopefully be established after a complete year of uninterrupted use.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – the implications of covid have resulted in applying the changing guidance each time we have re-opened, which has been welcomed by users, who have expressed confidence in our arrangements.
- Political – the support given to the project initially through the decision to invest is proving to be welcomed by the activity levels the site generates.
- Reputation – the site is regarded as providing one of the best surfaces to play on in the North West, it has received many favourable comments on the quality of provision.
- Equality & Diversity – The site is fully accessible.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS; none

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