

Eamonn McCartan

David Crookshanks

From: David Crookshanks
Sent: 25 October 2007 12:45
To: DCAL
Cc: DCAL Sport; eamonnmccartan@sportni.net
Subject: Draft Consultation for NI Strategy for Sport and Recreation 2007

Dear Mr Poots (Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure)

I read the documentation with interest and am concerned that all the hard work that is envisaged by 2017 will be undeliverable.

The reason I say this is the cost. As we speak District Councils are preparing to sell off valueable land (assets) that when you require this to deliver your program, the funds will not be there to purchase additional land.

An example of this is happening in my own town, Holywood. The District Council are preparing to re-structure sports in Holywood. A good move you might say, however, they are selling of land, the size of 2 rugby or gaelic or football pitches to pay for this.

This 'gain' will be in the quality of provision of facility - not in pitches. This will also fund an astroturf pitch in Sullivan Upper School.

The reason I highlight this is I am involved with Holywood FC Youth a local football team. We have 2 under 15 teams, an Under 13 team an under 12 team, 2 under 11 teams and 5 teams playing mini soccer. This involves approxiamtely 165 children.

Two years ago we had 3 teams.

As a result of our success, we have only 3 teams that can play fixtures in Holywood. The under 15 teams are based in Bangor - due one junior pitch and a seior pitch at Seapark for Holywood FC - the amatuer league team. One of the Under 11 teams was regisiter in the South Belfast League, where they allocate pitches (all the other teams playing 11-a-side are in the Ards Brough Youth League). The mini soccer is played in Bangor, Dundonald and Newtownards.

As for training, we have to pay £70 per hour for winter training, using an astroturf pitch at Ashfield School - again away from our home town.

As you will see, if the sale if the land did not have to proceed and the District Council, supported by our Government, put this current waste land to proper use Holywood would be a thriving town for sport for all - not just for those who can afford to join private health clubs.

I await your comments

Yours sincerely

David Crookshanks

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