



# SPACE TO PLAY

A new approach to sports facilities for clubs  
in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown

**DÚN LAOGHAIRE-RATHDOWN COUNTY COUNCIL  
SPORTS FACILITIES STRATEGY 2017-2022  
(October 2017)**



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## Executive Summary

Sport and physical activity are important to the people of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown.

The County has one of the highest rates of participation of any local authority in Ireland.

There are however constraints in terms of the development of new facilities by being the most densely populated area outside Dublin City Centre and with land values that are a barrier to private or club based facility development.

This document sets out a logical, deliverable pathway for the optimum use of existing, and development of new public sporting and physical activity facilities within the County.

The Council recognise that the pressure on individual clubs to cater for an ever growing population is challenging.

Census Figures from 2016 show that Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown saw 5.3% population growth since 2011, the fifth fastest in the Country.

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council (The Council) has traditionally taken on the role of being a major provider of sporting facilities to clubs and organisations through lands under its ownership. This strategy document reinforces The Council's commitment in this area.

This will happen through the relationships already forged with local sporting clubs, regional and national sporting organisations, schools and community groups.

The preferred method of making best use of the respective strengths and assets of those groups is to develop sporting facilities for public use on public land, be that council owned or with shared public access through school partnerships.

It is not intended that any major development will be undertaken using public money to fund the development of sporting facilities that are not broadly accessible to a wide cross section of the population of the county.

The provision of sporting facilities must also be seen in the context of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown's wider responsibility in the provision of public space, visual amenity and safety. The Council know the value of sport but it must be seen in its wider context of a mixed interest society.

Development of this framework for a new strategy on sports facilities has also been guided by the reality that there is very limited land available for the development of new sporting facilities.

To provide some context it shall be noted that the demand from sports clubs for new facility development in 2015 exceeded, by a factor of three, the maximum public land available.

In the course of this overall document the Council have:

- Audited the current public facilities for sport and physical activity within the council area;
- Researched and outlined the needs of each of the approximately 48 sports operating within the council area.
- Suggested how partnership can be fostered with sports clubs, sporting governing bodies, schools and with DLR Leisure.
- Outlined the need for an online booking facility to determine the full extent of usage and assist in maintenance and optimisation of use.
- Suggested open and transparent criteria for future development of sporting facilities.
- Outlined key areas for the future development of sporting facilities within the county.



## 1 Context

This document has been compiled with reference to the existing County Sports Participation Strategy; Dlr Open Space Strategy, the National Physical Activity Plan, Sport Ireland research through the Irish Sports Monitor on the changing trends within sport; and an understanding from overseas on the optimum way to approach the provision of facilities to populations similar in size to that of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown.

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council have sought to take account of individual clubs and sports needs and engaged in both face to face and online engagement so that as many voices as possible can be heard.

## 2 Vision

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Councils vision is to provide facilities for sport and physical activity that are well maintained, sufficient in number and accessible to as many local people as possible.

Our primary focus is to provide facilities that will enable participation by as wide a cross section of the population across a diverse range of sports.

The Council will do this through relationships and interactions with local sporting clubs, regional and national sporting organisations, schools, community groups and Dlr Leisure.

## 3 Timeframe & Delivery

This document provides a framework for how the development of sporting facilities across the County can be managed to best effect.

It contains a blend of short, medium and long term elements.

**2018:** Within the first year after its adoption there should be a clearly established method of optimising the current use of facilities which the Council provides to clubs and through partnerships with Dlr Leisure and schools. This will primarily be driven by adoption and use of an online booking system.

**2019:** Within two years there should be acceptance of the criteria against which improvements to existing facilities and the building of new facilities will be communicated, judged and determined.

**2019:** A mid-term review of the strategy and its actions will be conducted and presented to the Council

**2020:** Within three years there should be the first realisation of improved facilities arising from a new collaborative approach to their provision to sporting clubs and groups. This will likely be through work on one or more of the Campus facilities identified in the conclusion of this strategy.

**2022:** Within five years there should be a fully functioning system for the management and maintenance of the best local authority provision of facilities to enable sport across the County.

It is recommended that a short annual report of facilities work undertaken and plans in place be compiled and published each year for the five year period of this strategy.

## 4 Current Sports Facilities

There are currently approximately 118 separate sporting facilities across the County (as at December 2016).

In addition there are some measure of sporting facilities at the 79 Primary schools and 38 secondary schools in the area.

The facilities will be included as an appendix to the final report, broken down by number of:

- Full grass GAA size pitches
- Full Size Rugby or Soccer Pitches
- Full Size All Weather GAA Pitches
- Full Size All weather Rugby or Soccer pitches



- Tennis facilities
- Swimming Pools
- Large Halls suitable for indoor sports
- Clubhouses

The findings of the facilities audit undertaken for the DLR Open Space Strategy 2011-2015 will also be integrated in the future planning process. Excerpt as detailed below:

“Of the 196 pitches, 88 (45%) are in public ownership, and 30 (15%) in private ownership. 78 (40%) are owned by educational bodies, reflecting the significant role schools and colleges play in the overall provision of all sports categories. In terms of hectarage, 54.9 ha of grass pitches (44.5% of total grass pitches hectarage) are in public ownership”

“Pitch ownership varies across the county. This may have an influence on the demand for pitches dependent upon the level and extent to which they are available for community use. Further work is required to analyse the quality, accessibility, usability and local demand for pitches.”

“The results of the quantitative assessment reflect the relative popularity of each sport. The highest level of provision is soccer pitches, which occupy 50.81 hectares - 41.6% of the land provided for all pitches. This is followed by gaelic and camogie pitches (37.77 ha.) at 30.9%. 29 rugby pitches have been identified and these occupy 30.55 hectares - 25% of the total land area. There are 4 cricket pitches occupying 3.05 hectares - 2.5% of the total land area.”

It is clear therefore that there is no standard ownership model a wide variety of these pitch and other sport based facilities.

In some cases individual clubs have developed their own facilities on public land and the ability to factor these into an overall system of strategic use will take time.

It will be an integral part of the long term strategy for the provision of public sports facilities that clear standardised criteria and pathway for individual facility development must be implemented and adhered to.

It is obvious that when land is at a premium that optimum use must be made of what is available.

A key element of the relationship between Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council as the owner and custodian of public lands, and sports clubs and others as private users, is the principle that public use of private lands and facilities must always be favoured over private development on public land.

As part of the consultation process it has been put to us that this may not suit all needs but as a principle of the greatest good it is one that the Council remain wedded to.

There will always be an option for private clubs to obtain land and develop their own facilities but that is outside the remit of how Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown fits into the equation of creating and maintaining an appropriate level of space for play in a sporting context.

## 5 Partnership With Sporting Clubs

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown is home to approximately 280 clubs across 48 different sports.

Within this document a sports club has been defined as being an organisation developed by and run within a local community for the purposes of providing sport to that community and not specifically for the purpose of making a profit.



Registered Sports Clubs in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown - June 2016	
Soccer	42
Tennis	16
Sailing	12
Golf	11
Hillwalking and Hiking	11
Hockey	10
Swimming and Water Polo	10
Cycling	9
GAA	9
Gymnastics	9
Community Games	8
Table Tennis	8
Athletics	7
Basketball	7
Rugby	7
Special Olympics	7
Badminton	6
Bowling/Boules	6
Boxing	6
Canoeing/Kayaking	6
Scuba Diving	6
Kickboxing & Self Defence	5
Martial Arts	5
Rowing	5
Camogie	4
Cricket	4
Tae Kwon Do	4
Lawn Bowls	3
Motorsport	3
Orienteering	3
ParkRun	5
Archery	2
Croquet	2
Fencing	2
Judo	2
Snooker	2
Squash	2
Volleyball	2
Handball	1
Life Saving	1

Olympic Handball	1
Pitch and Putt	1
Riding	1
Rock Climbing	1
Skiing	1
Trampoline	1
Triathlon	1
Ultimate Frisbee	1

It should be noted that a significant number of the larger field sports clubs rely entirely or in large part on facilities on lands owned by the Council.

The cost of renting these facilities from a private third party provider, were that to be possible, would run to over €1 million per annum.

This would make the provision of the sporting opportunities they provide either wholly unsustainable or only at a markedly higher cost to members.

The contribution that the clubs made in total in 2015 to the rental and maintenance of the pitch facilities was less than €50,000. This disparity will, if unchecked lead to unsustainable pressure on the resources of the County.

The Council also recognise, having consulted across the wider sports club community that gaps exist within the provision of facilities to encourage more diverse participation in sport through clubs and sports that are growing fast but operating outside the traditional strong area of team field sport.

As a part of this creation of a new approach to the policy of providing sports facilities the Council have engaged with clubs to determine a better way to work in future. Over 40 clubs took part in an open meeting as part of the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Sports Forum.

53 clubs subsequently participated in an online survey to ascertain their present situation and give an indication of current future needs.

Follow up meetings with clubs were then held grouped as Indoor Clubs, Outdoor Team Sports and Other individual based sports on land or water.

A forum with sports clubs to consult and gather their views on the key elements of the approach within this strategy then took place in December 2016, after presentation to the Local Area Committees and 34 clubs made subsequent submissions through an online survey open through early January 2017.

There has been a broad willingness amongst clubs throughout this process to work as partners rather than merely to see the Council as below cost service providers.

The various ways in which this partnership may take shape will be addressed in the criteria for developing and maintaining facilities and more collaborative approaches to facilities that are recommended towards the potential creation of a number of local sports campuses.

A summary sport by sport breakdown is set out later in the strategy document looking at the broad requirements for each of the sports located in the County, based on an understanding gleaned from consultation and research.



## 6 Existing Use

The Council accepts that existing use of facilities has become well established among many clubs and the Council does not see this new approach as in any way a dismantling of existing relationships.

The implementation of enhanced management structures relating to the booking and maintenance of facilities owned by the Council will include full recognition of existing use.

The purpose of the improvements proposed is to develop a system that is fair to all, adaptable to changing circumstances with regard to use and popularity of sports and clubs and to optimise the use of facilities and the quality of their maintenance and sustainability into the future.

## 7 Sport by Sport Analysis

### Archery

The sport can be played indoors or outdoors depending on the variety. Ireland has had success in hosting the World Field Archery Championships which took place at Kilruddery.

Equipment is largely transportable though an indoor facility including storage would be useful in terms of providing a base. There is a large bank of archery equipment located in Dlr Leisure Loughinstown, which is used in camps and programmes within the sports hall.

### Athletics

The County is home to some of the country's most successful athletics clubs. In terms of cross country, the development of a national Cross Country Course as part of the National Sports campus, and the existing course in Santry Demesne means that there will likely be sufficient advanced level facilities nearby to cater for demand.

In terms of track facilities, the closure of the track at UCD has left a void with only the track at Kilbogget Park as an existing facility.

It is desirable that at least one athletics 400 meter x 6 lane facility be developed in the County though if public land or money is required it would need to be on a collaborative basis between clubs and the Council.

### Badminton

The main emphasis for development at national level is at Marino to the North of the City and at the new National Indoor Arena as part of the National Sports Campus to the West.

Equipment is largely transportable and clubs operate in a variety of spaces. An indoor facility including storage would be useful in terms of providing a base.

### Basketball

There is a strong tradition of school and university based participation in the sport and club facilities tend to be based at education venues. The National Basketball Arena is located in South County Dublin and there are existing good quality facilities at UCD and in a number of local schools. There are also a number of informal areas including one or two hoops where basketball can be played. Cost and peak time availability can be a major issue.

### Bowling & Boules

Existing facilities on lands shared with other sports are considered to be sufficient to cater for even an increasing demand. This includes facilities in Shankill, Peoples Park, Marlay Park and Cabinteely Park. It is recognised that this is not shared by the clubs, but have not seen sufficient demand or alternative suggestions to change this view.





## Boxing

Significant national funding was available to boxing following a wave of success at amateur level and especially at the Olympic Games. This was spent largely on bringing facilities to a minimum viable level including investment in separate changing facilities and toilets for female participants.

There is a strong sense of local 'roots' in the sport. This presents a challenge in shifting physical location but if that provides for better facilities at a more cost effective rate to clubs and participants this should be taken into account.

The creation of a single venue in the County which could serve as a base for a number of Boxing and other Martial Arts Clubs does have merit and is one of the considerations recommended in the medium term as part of this new strategy.

## Camogie

Camogie tends to use the same pitches and facilities as other Gaelic Games and significant progress has been evident in terms of a 'One Club' approach. This collaboration is a model for how the Council see sporting facilities being improved and developed.

## Canoeing/Kayaking

There are a number of sea based kayaking clubs and individual users of the various access points to the sea. It is apparent from submissions and feedback through the consultation process that there is a strong desire to improve the facilities devoted to water based sports within the County.

Further development of water based sport including sea rowing is tied to overall development of the Harbour areas.

## Community Games

The principle of Community Games is based on representing local community areas based on parish boundaries. Use of existing public facilities is negotiated at local level and the Council see no need to alter this tried and tested approach.

## Cricket

Cricket is likely to see growth in popularity in coming years with the likely granting of full test status to the Irish National team.

Facilities at Malahide and Clontarf to the north of the County and a planned national training facility at the National Sports Campus to the west cater for national level but there is a gap in the provision of facilities in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown.

The footprint of a cricket pitch and the care that needs to be taken of the wicket facility presents unique challenges in terms of shared facilities. The Council are in discussions with Leinster Cricket around a possible cricket pitch at the rear of Shanganagh Park.

It may be that the development of a pitch facility in collaboration with clubs and a local school would answer the need for a local facility but also one that could be maintained with greater care than might be possible within a public park facility.

## Croquet

Existing facilities on lands shared with other sports are considered to be sufficient to cater for even an increasing demand.



## Cycling

Cycling Clubs in the County are in the main focused on road and mountain bike racing and make good use of existing general infrastructure. The likely development of an indoor track as part of the National Sports Campus in Abbotstown means that such a similar development in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown would not be required.

There is a very well used mountain biking trail located in Ticknock under the remit of the Dublin Mountains Partnership. This is likely to require investment with regards to maintenance and possible extension of routes. Should proposals of sufficient merit for development of trails on land that would otherwise be unsuitable for pitches or other development this could be considered in the future.

There is also an interest in the provision of a BMX bike facility to replace a former one in Marlay Park and may be considered as part of a future sports campus discussion for that location.

The Council are also aware of the broader range and appeal of cycling in a leisure and sustainable transport context. The Councils detailed cycling strategy (Smarter Travel, Better Living 2010) has a range of actions and policies that will roll over to this framework aimed at clubs and a level of engagement between the Councils Sports Unit and the Cycling Officer is important to maintain.

## Fencing

Equipment is transportable and clubs operate in a variety of spaces. An indoor facility including storage would be useful in terms of providing a base.

## GAA

GAA, together with Rugby and Soccer provide the largest games provision service, especially at younger age groups and represent the highest demand on land and club facilities owned by the Council. GAA clubs will be a key part of the proposed online booking system.

GAA requires a larger footprint for a full size pitch, 40% beyond that needed for rugby and soccer.

The Council recognise the pressure on facilities at key pinch points and have also proposed a greater collaborative approach over the four local authority regions in the Dublin area to liaise with fixture scheduling. The reality is that it is not sustainable to add more fixtures in narrow windows on existing pitches.

The development of All Weather facilities, in partnership with schools in order to benefit from greater dual use and security is a key element of the proposed framework for developing facilities.

## Golf

The Council do not see a role for the Council in providing facilities beyond those already in private use and the public courses at Stepside and Marlay Park.

## Gymnastics

Growing demand and popularity will require greater indoor facility provision with suitable storage.

As commercial property values and rents fluctuate it is desirable to provide suitable indoor space which can cater for a wide variety of sports and clubs operating in a collaborative manner.

Gymnastics is likely to be a key stakeholder in the Large Hall recommendation included as part of this document.



## Handball

The GAA is to develop a new National Handball Centre adjacent to Croke Park. An existing alley in UCD and a Ball Alley as part of the Harold School in Glashtule are the only known current facilities in the County.

## Hillwalking and Hiking

Hillwalking makes good use of natural infrastructure. There are a number of well used trails in the Dublin mountains area and along the Dublin Mountains Way. Any future developments would be in partnership with the Dublin Mountains Partnership as much of the land on which these trails are located are under the ownership of Coillte.

## Hockey

Hockey is the fourth major field sport providing sport to a significant number of participants. Maintenance of private and school facilities is expensive creating a demand for public facilities to ease the financial burden.

Due to the nature of the pitch surface requirements the development of Council owned pitches that would be solely used by hockey may not adhere to the policy on a collaborative multi-sport approach. Further investigation is required on the quality of pitch needed which might accommodate hockey alongside other major field sports.

## Lawn Bowls

Existing facilities on lands shared with other sports are considered to be sufficient to cater for even an increasing demand.

## Judo

The creation of a single venue in the County which could serve as a base for a number of Judo and other Martial Arts Clubs has merit and is one of the considerations recommended in the medium term as part of this new suggested strategy framework.

## Kickboxing

The creation of a single venue in the County which could serve as a base for a number of Kickboxing and other Martial Arts Clubs does have merit and is one of the considerations recommended in the medium term as part of this new suggested strategy framework.

## Life Saving

The use of existing pools as part of Dlr Leisure and other water based facilities are considered sufficient to cater for current and likely future demand.

## Martial Arts

The creation of a single venue in the County which could serve as a base for a number of Boxing and Martial Arts Clubs does have merit and is one of the considerations recommended in the medium term as part of this new suggested strategy.

## Motorsport

The growth of trail biking is likely to be significant but there are no obvious areas for development apart from that on Coillte owned land. Should proposals of sufficient merit for development of trails on land that would otherwise be unsuitable for sporting or other development this could be considered in the future.

## Olympic Handball

The regular use of a central large hall space, with storage for goals and equipment would be desirable. Handball is a popular sport within different community groups less well catered for by the larger team sports and Olympic Handball is one sport that would benefit from the Large Hall space The Council have recommended.

## Orienteering

Orienteering makes good use of natural infrastructure. Access issues and on-going maintenance of trails and signage is the extent to which it impacts on the provision of sports facilities. This would be in partnership with the Dublin Mountains Partnership as much of the land on which these trails are located are under the ownership of Coillte.

## Park Run

A growing movement which can be catered for using existing facilities in public park areas. Management of timetabling, parking, storage facilities for marshalling equipment presents some challenges and they may be met as part of overall discussion on the sports campus proposals as part of this strategy.

## Pitch and Putt

Existing facilities would appear to be sufficient to meet demand.

## Horse Riding

Existing facilities would appear to be sufficient to meet demand.

## Rock Climbing

Rock Climbing makes good use of natural infrastructure. There is high use of Dalkey Quarry during the summer months and there are also private indoor facilities based in locations such as Sandyford and UCD.

## Rowing

Further development of water based sport including sea rowing is tied to overall development of the Harbour areas.

It is apparent from submissions and feedback through the consultation process that there is a strong desire to improve the facilities devoted to water based sports within the County.



With many of the facilities in private ownership this presents a challenge for Council investment but it is recommended that assistance is provided in terms of a collaborative approach and a feasibility study of how collaboration might be fostered for the good of all.

### Rugby

Rugby, together with GAA and Soccer provide the largest games provision service, especially at younger age groups and represent the highest demand on land and club facilities owned by the Council. Rugby clubs will be a key part of the proposed online booking system.

The Council recognise the pressure on facilities at key pinch points and have also proposed a greater collaborative approach over the four local authority regions in the Dublin area to liaise with fixture scheduling.

The reality is that it is not sustainable to add more fixtures in narrow windows on existing pitches.

The development of All Weather facilities, in partnership with schools in order to benefit from greater dual use and security is a key element of the strategy for developing facilities and may be particularly well suited to the school base in the county.

### Sailing

Sailing is a high profile and very visible sport within Dún Laoghaire. The main facilities are within private ownership and any further development of water based sport is tied to overall development of the Harbour area.

It is apparent from submissions and feedback through the consultation process that there is a strong desire to improve the facilities devoted to water based sports within the County.

With many of the facilities in private ownership this presents a challenge for Council investment but it is recommended that assistance is provided in terms of a collaborative approach and a feasibility study of how collaboration might be fostered for the good of all.

### Scuba Diving

Clubs operate out of existing facilities such as Bullock Harbour and recent upgrades to the storage facilities at Scotsman's Bay mean that facilities should be sufficient to cater for demand.

### Skiing

The private outdoor facility at Kilternan and indoor facility in Sandyford should be sufficient to satisfy current and future demand.

### Snooker

The Council do not see a role in providing facilities beyond those already in private use.



## Soccer

Soccer, together with GAA and Rugby provide the largest games provision service, especially at younger age groups and represent the highest demand on land and club facilities owned by the Council. Soccer clubs will be a key part of the proposed online booking system.

The large number of individual clubs presents a challenge that will need to be addressed through a greater collaborative approach to the developing of better facilities on existing lands given over to sport.

The Council recognise the pressure on facilities at key pinch points and have also proposed a greater collaborative approach over the four local authority regions in the Dublin area to liaise with fixture scheduling.

The development of All Weather facilities, in partnership with schools in order to benefit from greater dual use and security is a key element of the strategy for developing facilities.

## Special Olympics

The variety of sports and facilities needed means that they should be covered under individual sports.

## Squash

There are squash courts located in UCD and in private gyms such as Westwood, which should be sufficient to meet current and future demand.

## Swimming and Water Polo

Existing Dlr Leisure facilities are well used, while the facilities at UCD and Newpark provide additional facilities that are utilised by clubs and the general public.

## Table Tennis

A growing indoor sport with significant potential across different age groups. Providing space and time within existing and new indoor facilities, with storage for equipment would be a desired outcome in the future.

## Tae Kwon Do

The creation of a single venue in the County which could serve as a base for a number of Tae kwon do and other Martial Arts Clubs has merit and is one of the considerations recommended in the medium term as part of this new suggested strategy framework.

## Tennis

New facilities are unlikely to be required in the short to medium term though some work in terms of maintenance and provision of toilet and or changing facilities may be needed at certain venues. This will be accommodated under the criteria for development alongside other sports and venues.

A number of local tennis clubs have benefited in recent years from capital funds through the Sports Capital Grants Scheme.

## Trampoline

There is a need for use of an indoor facility with suitable storage. As commercial property values and rents fluctuate it is desirable to provide suitable indoor space which can cater for a wide variety of sports and clubs operating in a collaborative manner. Trampolining, Gymnastics, Badminton and others could potentially be catered for together in the Large Hall recommendation included as part of this document.

## Triathlon

While Triathlon uses facilities that are common to those needed for athletics, cycling and swimming it is a sport in its own right and a fast growing one.

Shared storage and bike maintenance facilities should be part of the discussion around the model of the Sports Campus, perhaps as a joint group submission with athletics clubs and park run.

## Ultimate Frisbee

A relatively new, youth based sport which tends to use existing open space facilities. Very transportable and a classic 'pop-up' sport. There is no need to factor any facility demands specific to Ultimate Frisbee.

## Volleyball

In similar fashion to Gymnastics, Badminton and other indoor sports there is a demand for suitable large hall provision with sufficient storage. This is addressed in the Large Hall recommendation included as part of this document.

## 8 Partnership with Governing Bodies

For the larger field sports in particular, the high demand for pitches in very short windows of 'game periods' presents a major challenge.

There is a need for improved communication and collaboration amongst administrators of leagues and tournaments in the Greater Dublin Area due to congested fixtures and resulting pressures on existing facilities.

The Council propose that a group comprising each of the four County Councils meet with these administrative units of the various sports on a six month basis to review timetabling of games and to work towards a position where greater use is made of scarce facilities and greater time set aside for necessary maintenance.

Clubs will also need to accept that there needs to be greater flexibility in the scheduling of matches if the current provision of facilities is to be maintained.

With regard to the wider base of sporting bodies, the Council propose that working relationships are established and maintained to provide guidance on the development needs of clubs outside of the major field sports.

## 9 Partnership With Schools

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown has a strong level of school sports facility provision. With sport and physical activity taking a more prominent position as an examinable subject in a developing curriculum there is corresponding pressure on schools to develop fit for purpose facilities.

The time at which these facilities would be used presents, for the most part an ideal overlap with the needs of sporting organisations.

As part of the long term development of sporting facilities for the people of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown it is imperative that future opportunities be explored to develop joint owned, joint managed facilities between schools, clubs and the Council.

The Council will look to work with schools and clubs to develop a template for the management of such joint owned and run facilities.

## 10 Partnership With DLR Leisure

It was clear through the consultation process that dlr Leisure provides an experienced and enthusiastic team willing to play a greater part in the provision of facilities for use by clubs in the County. This could include targeted support programmes in areas such as strength and conditioning as well as meeting/workshop rooms.

There is an opportunity to increase sports club use of gym facilities and all weather pitches within these centres in a manner that could provide space to clubs during peak times. The swimming pool facilities located within the various dlr Leisure centres are also well used by individuals, communities and some sports clubs.

Understanding of the facilities and time slots that are available and a collaborative approach aimed at increasing use of programmes and facilities will yield a return for all parties.

## 11 Financial Planning

There is a clear disparity between what is paid for the use of Council owned property and what it costs to maintain. It should be noted that there is no intention that the Council would seek to fully recoup the costs of this maintenance, but more sustainable practices need to be introduced in order to meet expected standards.

The Council propose that this should include:

- Introduction of an online booking facility and associated system of credits
- Performance Quality Standards for all dlr pitches
- The identification of alternative and supplementary funding streams
- An open and transparent set of criteria and possible project timelines for regular and larger scale capital investment

## 12 Online Booking System

It is recommended that an online booking system for pitches and facilities be introduced in the first 12 months following publication of this strategy framework.

A detailed specification of what is required in order to make this as effective as possible will be made public within three months of the adoption of this strategy.

This online booking system will be backed up by a system of credits taking into account club's traditional usage and size and giving access to facilities based at or near current levels on a cost neutral basis to clubs.

Having a system of knowledge about actual use and the stresses of pinch points will be a vital part of developing a system that is fair to all and robust enough to adapt over time to match shifting population and activity patterns.

A greater understanding of these uses and needs across the entire sports club population will provide for greater clarity in terms of planning upgrades to existing facilities and provision of new, most likely in partnership with clubs and schools.

## 13 Facility Maintenance

The Council will develop a Performance Quality Standard Table (PQS) for pitches in dlr based on the good practice model used by Sport England.

By the summer of 2018 the Council will propose to have all pitches assessed under this PQS and create a maintenance programme for pitches within dlr.

## 14 Identification of Future Funding Streams

A collaborative approach is central to the on-going strategy with regard to the development of sports facilities.

It is recommended that preference be given to projects where Council funding will be part of an overall mix including direct contribution from clubs through fundraising or borrowings, partnership with National Governing Bodies and other streams of potential funding at national or regional level such as the Sports Capital Development Programme.

A key element of this will be to use public money as leverage for other fundraising and financial planning, as opposed to as a replacement for them.

Financial planning and cost benefit consideration will be treated seriously within the consideration of facility development.

## 15 Criteria For Future Development

It is important in the development of sporting facilities for the future that all parties are aware of the criteria which will be applied to consideration of application for development and use of facilities.



The criteria should include but not be limited to the following:

Affiliation	All clubs using or applying to use facilities owned and operated by Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council must be affiliated to their National Governing Body as recognised by Sport Ireland and be in good standing.	Required
Annual Returns	As part of the agreement to use facilities clubs must present annual returns on their number of registered members, the number of teams they field and the number of events or fixtures staged.	Required
Past & Future	This should be done on the basis of planned numbers for the year ahead and the existence of an up to date strategic plan based on past and projected future growth. The numbers should be accurate and will be verified.	Required and verified
Online Booking	With the development of an online booking system for facilities clubs will be responsible for ensuring that bookings made are done in a timely fashion and in good faith.	Adopted
Training Facilities	Clubs will also register use of pitches and other Council facilities for training purposes, a practice which has not previously been required. This will give a greater awareness of the pressure on facilities and the programme of maintenance needed.	Required and Verified
Greatest Number of Individuals	Preference in terms of capital investment will go to projects serving the greatest number of individuals across the range of ages, activities and abilities within the community.	Important
Collaboration Preference	Preference in terms of capital investment will go to projects that are put forward jointly by clubs or schools that will facilitate multi-use of the spaces proposed.	Important

Land Ownership	Preference will be given to submissions for development that are on public land over those which are in private ownership.	Important
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The Council will develop a clear needs assessment checklist for potential future capital projects similar to Sport England's – Assessing Needs & Opportunities Guide for Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities.

### An Approximate Capital Project Timeframe Guide

The following table sets out the broad stages from conception to completion and possible duration of each section that would be involved in a capital project on public land in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown.

Please note that each stage must be completed/ met before progressing to the following stage.

Step	Detail	Potential Duration
1.	Initial concept tabled by clubs to Sports development section in dlrCC	3-6 months
2.	Potential project meets the criteria for development	
3.	Feasibility Study carried out by club. If funding required can make application through Universal Grants Scheme	3-6 months Annual Scheme open in August/ September
4.	Meetings with Council officials to discuss details	3-6 months
5.	Preparation of report to submit for inclusion in The Councils capital expenditure programme	6 months
6.	Appoint design team, finalise design and phases if required	6 to 12 months
7.	Part 8 process if required	6-12 months
8.	Source funding and Sport Capital grants application*	12 months
9.	Tender process for building project	6-12 months
10.	Start of build	

\*Subject to Sport Capital funding becoming available

## 16 Recommended Areas For Development

### 16.1 Large Hall Facility Development

The shortage of large hall space is a gap in the provision of facilities owned and operated by the Council to be made available for clubs.

Facility provision is generally geared more towards the larger field sports but greater encouragement of indoor sports appealing to a diverse but nonetheless large population should be a long term goal.

Existing expenditure by clubs on the hire or rental of hall space without sufficient or suitable storage is very substantial and there is an existing reasonable case to be made for development of a new Large Hall facility on one or more existing Council properties.

It is recommended that a working group comprising representatives of clubs and the Council be established to explore such a development.

### 16.2 Boxing/Martial Arts Facility Development

There is demand from across a number of sports who share common space needs and are likely to experience growth in the coming years.

Creating a single dedicated area for sports including Boxing, Martial Arts, Judo, Tae Kwon Do and others has merit and is recommended to be explored using the potential of existing premises that could be repurposed that will be close to public travel routes. This should also include an investigation around the potential for this facility to be developed as a centre of excellence that may include ancillary elements such as high performance and sports rehabilitation.

It is recognised that cultural differences and strong local connections to communities are a challenge in this area, but there should be an exploration of the potential to offer better facilities to more clubs and more participants within a dedicated facility.

### 16.3 School Partnerships Development

It is recommended that future provision of required floodlit all weather surfaces be explored as a three way partnership between schools, clubs and the Council.

The security, land and time overlap would create optimum conditions for efficient use and the best value return for all parties.

This may need to be facilitated through the creation of a 'joint venture' style arrangement between the parties covering agreed shared use, payment for upkeep and maintenance and collaboration for the greater good of all.

### 16.4 Campus Facilities Development

Collaboration and shared use must be a central part of future development of larger scale sporting facilities. This is the norm across Europe and has also been used to good effect locally throughout Ireland.

A working example of this collaborative development is the on-going discussions around a shared clubhouse facility in Kilbogget Park among the clubs located there. It is recommended that a full feasibility study be undertaken with an initial group of the clubs operating in Kilbogget Park to develop an improved shared facility that will improve the quality of service provided by the clubs.

This model could be replicated in other locations to the benefit of the clubs and local communities.

The Council and the Sports Forum can play an important role in opening communication and breaking down barriers that have traditionally existed between individual sports or clubs and enabling a better sports facility environment.

### 16.5 Online Booking System Development

It is recommended that an online booking system for pitches and facilities be introduced in the first 12 months following publication of this strategy.

A detailed specification of what is needed in order to make this as effective as possible, but at the same time not burdening clubs with an excessive administration uplift, will be published within three months of the adoption of this strategy.

This online booking system will be backed up by a system of credits taking into account club's traditional usage and size and giving access to facilities based at or near current levels on a cost neutral basis to clubs.

## 17 Appendix 1 - Consultation Process Overview

As part of the development of this strategy document, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council Partnership engaged in a detailed consultation process with a range of partners and stakeholders, with a particular focus on local sports clubs.

### Timeline of Consultation Carried Out:

- February/March 2016 - Internal Parks/Sports Unit Meetings & Conversations
- March 2016 - Appointment of Rob Hartnett as consultant to assist in development
- 22nd March 2016 – Initial Presentation to SPC (Environment Climate Change & Energy)
- 23rd March 2016 - Sports Forum Presentation & Consultation
- March to September 2016 - Sports Club Online Survey (51 submitted)
- 23rd May 2016 – Dún Laoghaire Area Committee Meeting
- 2nd June 2016 – Follow-Up Meetings with Clubs Grouped by Facility Type
- 8th June 2016 – Dundrum Area Committee Meeting
- 21st June 2016 – Meeting with dlr Leisure Management Team
- 27th July 2016 – Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Sports Partnership Board
- 15th September 2016 – SPC (Environment Climate Change & Energy) Presentation & Update
- 3rd October 2016 – Initial Paper to Dundrum Area Committee Meeting
- 24th October 2016 – Initial Paper to Dún Laoghaire Area Committee Meeting
- November 2016 – Development of Draft Strategy Incorporating Feedback & Consultation
- December 2016 - Draft circulated to PPN for consideration and feedback
- 6th December 2016 – Presentation of Initial Draft (inc. feedback from Area Committee Meetings) to Sports Clubs





- December 2016/January 2017 – Opportunity for Submissions from Sports Clubs (34 received)
- February/March 2017 – Meetings and discussions with internal stakeholders including Dlr Parks Management
- April/May 2017 – Amendments to Draft document to incorporate required changes and consultation feedback

## 18 Appendix 2 - Sample - Sport England's Assessing Needs & Opportunities Guide For Indoor & Outdoor Sports Facilities

How to undertake and apply needs assessments for sports facilities.

### Checklist - July 2014

This document presents the checklists for each of the three stages approach to undertaking a needs assessment for sport facilities. The full guidance document provides detailed advice on how to undertake each stage and individual step.

- Stage A:** Prepare and tailor the approach
- Stage B:** Gather information on Supply and Demand
- Stage C:** Assessment – Bring the Information Together

### Stage A: Prepare and Tailor the Approach - checklist

At the end of this Stage A you should be able to answer the following questions. If you cannot, you may need to revisit these areas before moving to the next stage.

Stage A : Prepare and tailor the approach	Tick	
	Yes	Requires Attention
<b>Purpose and objectives</b>		
Do you know why the assessment is being undertaken (drivers)?		
Is there a clear understanding as to how the findings of the assessment, once it is completed, will be used?		
Is there a clear purpose and focus to the work?		
Is it clearly articulated what the assessment is seeking to achieve?		
Have a clear set of objectives been developed?		
Is there a clear time horizon the assessment will look to?		
Are you including future needs?		
<b>Proportionate</b>		
Is the scale and scope of the assessment proportionate to its intended use?		
<b>Sports Scope</b>		
Is it clear what sports facilities you are including?		
Is it clear why you are including specific facilities and are they linked to achieving your objectives?		
Are you clear what sports are the most popular in your area?		
Have you contacted the NGB's? See Appendix 2.		
Have you contacted community sports representatives?		
Do the NGB's have priorities within your area?		
Are you clear on the level of play of specific sports within your area?		
Are you including facilities for the most important sports within your area?		
<b>Geographical Scope</b>		
Does your study area reflect the catchment areas of the different facilities included within the assessment?		
Have you considered joint working with neighbouring LA's for facilities with cross boundary catchments?		

Have you considered dividing your area into appropriate sub areas for specific facilities?		
Are you clear on the catchments of any specialist sports facilities within your area?		
Are you clear on the specific modes of travel for different types of facilities?		
<b>Project Management</b>		
Is there a clear project manager?		
Is there a clear project brief and project plan?		
Is the project team made up of appropriate representatives, for example all relevant internal LA departments for a district wide study?		
Has the project got senior officer and member support?		
Is it clear who the external stakeholders will be?		
Have the relevant NGB contacts been identified locally and nationally?		
Have you confirmed and agreed the level of support, timescales and input to be provided by external stakeholders?		



## Stage B: Gathering the supply and demand information - checklist

At the end of this Stage B you should be able to answer the following questions. If you cannot, you may need to revisit these areas before moving to the next stage.

Stage B : Gather Information on supply and demand	Tick	
	Yes	Requires Attention
<b>Supply information</b>		
Have you included facilities provided by all sectors, such as, education, club, and commercial? Have you considered cross-boundary issues?		
Have you included any planned facilities that you know about?		
Do you know how many facilities are within the area?		
Have you considered the capacity of facilities, and not just a simple facility count?		
Have you collected information on the overall condition of facilities? Have you used feedback from user surveys and facility managers to help with this?		
Have you considered if the facilities are fit for purpose to meet the levels of play for specific sports? Have you contacted the NGB's to help with this?		
Have any facilities used national quality schemes (NBS/Quest) to help with comparisons and is this information captured?		
Do you have local usage data that can help in establishing travel times and catchments for facilities?		
Are there any factors that require different catchments for the same facility type, such as urban/rural split?		
Have you mapped your facilities using your catchments?		
Have you a clear picture of how busy the facilities are? How the facilities are being programmed and managed?		
Are there any management programming issues that impact on the availability of specific facilities?		
<b>Demand information</b>		
What is the current and future demographic and socio-economic profile of your area?		
Are you clear on what the demands are for sports and activities within your area? What does both national and local participation data say for your area?		
Is there any indication of unmet and latent demand for specific facilities or activities?		
Is there any indication that current demand and usage is being displaced to facilities outside your area and if so, are you clear why this is?		
Has information been gathered on the potential future demand in the area including trends and changes, population projections and feedback from sports clubs and other users?		
Are there any local priorities and targets for specific activities that will create new or additional demand?		
Have the NGB's, or other parties identified any specific targets for particular sports that will create new or additional demands within your area?		
<b>Consultation</b>		
Are there any existing user surveys that you can utilise?		
Have you identified and consulted with key user groups and providers?		

Have you contacted the NGBs (see Appendix 2), and CSP's?		
Have you contacted local sports clubs?		
Have you ensured the consultation techniques/formats area tailored to the groups /users you are trying to contact?		





Stage C : Bringing the information together	Tick	
	Yes	Requires Attention
<b>Quantity</b>		
How many facilities are there?		
How are facilities being used? Are they generally busy/full or is there spare capacity?		
Are there any issues that impact on the use of the facility		
Are specific facilities experiencing high levels of usage at certain times of the day and on certain days of the week?		
Are all facilities full or are some busier than others?		
What are the possible reasons for these observations and what does it tell you?		
<b>Quality</b>		
Does the quality of facilities meet the standard required or desired by the user? If not, are there any specific facilities this affects?		
Is provision appropriate to meet the relevant NGB standard of play and competition? If not, what is the impact?		
How is quality a factor in attracting or discouraging participation and usage?		
<b>Accessibility</b>		
How does accessibility affect the way in which facilities are being used (or not used)?		
Can demand physically travel to the current facility stock? Are there specific geographic areas where accessibility is having a significant effect on usage?		
Is accessibility a reason why certain facilities are busy while others may have spare capacity?		
How do accessibility issues build on any initial thoughts on whether the number and size of facilities is sufficient?		
In addition to the number and size of facilities therefore – are they in the right place and is there appropriate coverage?		
If there are 'gaps' in provision – is there sufficient untapped demand to justify new provision or are there other alternatives to think about?		
<b>Availability</b>		
Are there restrictions on some facilities that affect their availability? How does this impact on the supply and demand relationship?		
Does the price of using certain facilities affect how they are used?		
Are opening times or programming of sessions an important factor in understanding the supply & demand picture?		
Does ownership and management affect the availability of facilities to users, or specific groups?		
Are there identifiable issues that impact on the capacity and availability of facilities for all potential users and/or specific groups?		
How do availability issues help to clarify the picture you are building of your local area?		
<b>Key findings and monitoring</b>		
Have you presented the key findings in a report?		
Have the key findings been checked and challenged with stakeholders?		
Has ongoing monitoring and review been given consideration?		

## 19 Appendix 3 - Sample PQS for Grass Pitches

The Performance Quality Standard Tables Structural Quality

Performance Standard	Method of Test	Quality Standard		
		High	Standard	Basic
<b>A. Herbage</b>				
i) Length of herbage: during the growing season	1	to be between 25 to 40mm	to be between 25 to 50mm	to be between 30 to 60mm
during the non-growing season	1	to be between 20 to 40mm	to be between 20 to 60mm	to be between 20 to 70mm
ii) Bare area.	3	Max. 10%	Max. 15%	Max. 25%
iii) Total ground cover	3	Min. 90%	Min. 85%	Min. 75%
iv) Desirable grass species	3	Min. 80%	Min. 70%	Min. 60%
v) Poa annua	3	Max. 10%	Max. 20%	Max. 30%
vi) Other undesirable grass species	3	Nil	Max. 5%	Max. 10%
vii) Weeds - Large-leaved	3	Nil	Max. 2%	Max. 10%
viii) Weeds - Small-leaved	3	Nil	Max. 5%	Max. 5%
ix) Moss	3	Nil	Nil	Max. 2%
x) Algae and Lichen	3	Nil	Nil	Nil
<b>B. Pests and Diseases</b>				
i) Diseases	3	Nil	Max. 2%	Max. 2%
ii) Earthworms	3	Max. 1%	Max. 5%	Max. 10%
iii) Pests	3	Nil	Nil	Max. 2%
<b>C. Profile</b>				
i) Root depth	4	Min. 150mm	Min. 100mm	Min. 75mm
ii) Thatch depth	4	Max. 5mm	Max. 10mm	Max. 15mm
iii) Rootzone medium	4	Min. 200mm	Min. 150mm	Min. 100mm
iv) Rootzone silt & clay content	14	Max. 6%	Max. 17%	Max. 25%
v) Infiltration rate	5	Min. 10mm per hour	Min. 5mm per hour	Min. 2mm per hour
vi) Evenness: 2m straight edge, or 0.5m straight edge	2	Max. variation 15mm 8mm	Max. variation 18mm 10mm	Max. variation 25mm 12mm
vii) Soil pH	15	6.0 - 7.0	5.8 - 7.5	5.8 - 7.5
viii) Soil nutrient level : P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub>	11	Index 2	Index 2	Index 2
ix) Soil nutrient level: K <sub>2</sub> O	12	Index 2	Index 2	Index 2
x) Gradient: Length ways Across the pitch	16	> 1:200 1:150 - 1:100	1:200 - 1:100 1:100 - 1:80	1:100 - 1:80 1:80 - 1:50
v) Infiltration rate	5	Min. 10mm per hour	Min. 5mm per hour	Min. 2mm per hour
<b>Presentational Quality</b>				
i) Appearance	Visual	100% uniform texture	Min. 90% uniform texture	Min. 70% uniform texture

ii) Goal posts	13	(a) Uprights are to be at right angles to the surface of the pitch (taking into account the gradient of the pitch). (b) Crossbars are to be at right angles to the uprights.		
iii) Pitch line markings	Visual	Visible from a min. 60m	Visible from a min. 45m	Visible from a min. 30m
iv) Surface debris	Visual	Nil	Nil	Nil
v) Sward colour	Visual	100% uniform	90% uniform	70% uniform
<b>Playing Quality</b>				
i) Ball roll	8	to be between 7 to 10m	to be between 4 to 12m	to be between 2 to 16m
ii) Hardness	10	to be between 65 to 120 gravities	to be between 55 to 140 gravities	to be between 35 to 200 gravities
iii) Traction	9	Min. 40 Nm	Min. 30 Nm	Min. 20 Nm
iv) Vertical ball bounce	7	to be between 32 to 42%	to be between 25 to 45%	to be between 20 to 55%











