



The Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Local Sport & Physical Activity Plan

2025-2029

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Introduction

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown is home to some of the biggest and most successful sporting clubs in Ireland. It is also recognised in national monitoring by Sport Ireland as having among the most active populations in the country.

In this plan we celebrate what is good but we aspire to do better, to reach more people from every background, and to provide facilities where the most amount of people can become active in the most diverse of ways.

Sport and being active is something that touches on most of our lives and is an important contributor to our personal health and the cohesion of our communities.

This plan has been developed following significant engagement with many stakeholders and representatives of many different and diverse groups. It has learned from those already engaged and from those for whom improvements can be made, from men, women, and children across the County, from those with disabilities and from those from different ethnic, social advantage and age cohorts.

I want to thank all those who have contributed at town hall meetings, in special focus groups, in online surveys, and by making their views and needs known.

I want to thank also the staff of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, dlr Leisure and our Local Sports Partnership, who are dedicated to helping keep us all active and healthy.

I look forward to seeing the progress of the plan over the coming months and years.



**Cllr. Jim O'Leary, An Cathaoirleach,
Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council**

This new Sport and Physical Activity Plan for Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown for the years 2025 – 2029 outlines our commitment to provide support, programmes and facilities to enable our population lead healthier and more active lives.

We are already among the most active areas in the country and have created good working relationships with multiple stakeholders that we will seek to continue and enhance through the more than sixty objectives outlined in this plan.

We have looked first at people, at how they are active, and at how we can support this while at the same time reach out to those that are less well served. We have looked at the places where people are active, from our pitches and our parks, to our tracks, our gyms, our indoor spaces, our pools and our natural environment. We have looked at how we deliver our wide range of sports programmes and facilities, at the work of dlr Leisure and our Local Sports Partnership. And we have looked to the longer future with some blue sky ideas that might come to life beyond this plan.



**Frank Curran, Chief Executive,
Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council**

LOCAL SPORT & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PLAN - GUIDING PRINCIPLES



VISION

Creating sport and physical activity opportunities for all.



PURPOSE

Enhancing the physical and mental wellbeing of all those who live in, work in, and visit Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown.



MISSION

Building the right facilities and programmes to position Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown as a guiding light in Ireland for sport and physical activity

Working across the local authority and with external clubs and partner organisations at local and national level to achieve this.

Achieving levels of participation across the whole of our population that lead the way in a national context.



SECTION A

CONTEXT

Importance of Sport & Physical Activity in Ireland

Context

According to the “Irish Sports Monitor Annual Report 2023” produced by Sport Ireland, **47% of the Irish adult population participated regularly in sport in 2023**, an increase of 4 percentage points since 2022.

This equates to approximately **1.97 million adults** who participated in sport and 202,000 adults who either resumed or began participating in sport since 2022.

This report classified 39% of the population as being highly active in 2023, meaning approximately 1.6 million adults met the National Physical Activity Guidelines through sport and recreational walking.



Health



Regular physical activity is linked to improved health and wellbeing, helping to create positive lifestyles and lowering mortality rates.

Increased physical activity levels across the population is a key part of the Government's broader agenda to improve the health and wellbeing of people living in Ireland.

“Healthy Ireland Strategic Action Plan 2013-2025” has a stated objective of requiring “increased knowledge and awareness among the public and all other relevant stakeholders of the benefits of physical activity and how to be active.”

Community



Sport and physical activity also play a vital social role at both individual and community levels. Forging bonds between individuals, reducing isolation and helping to promote inclusion and integration within communities.

However, it is clear that the benefits of active participation in sport are not currently enjoyed equally by all sectors in our society.

The “National Sports Policy 2018-2027” illustrates that participation levels in sport are significantly smaller among lower socio-economic groups, people with a disability, older groups and females.



Economic

There is a significant economic benefit to participation in sport and physical activity, with 3.1% of consumer expenditure in 2018 being on sports related goods and services.

Volunteers also play a crucial role here, giving an estimated value of €1.5 billion in time and effort back into the industry.

The “National Sports Policy 2018 – 2027” reported an estimated €1.5 billion cost to our annual health budget due to physical inactivity, indicating the scale of the financial benefit to be gained.



Academic

Statistical evidence supports a long-held belief that sport and physical activity can help academic performance.

The 2013 ESRI research study “Keeping Them in the Game” found a positive association between playing sport and Leaving Certificate performance, with a contrasting performance effect found in those that dropped out of sport, especially young girls.



Sport and physical activity brings clear benefits to society and the individual, which only increase as more of the population participates.

As a result, this plan for Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown seeks to increase access to sport and physical activity for all across the County.

To do so, the current structure, existing policies, and overall performance in the delivery of sport and physical activity must be examined to identify areas of strength to continue, and relative areas of weakness to be improved upon.



Current State of Play in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown

Introduction

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council has a strong track record of developing and supporting sport and physical activity in the County. It is home to approximately 300 sports clubs across 48 different types of sport and physical activity. There are over 120 separate sporting facilities across the County in addition to sporting facilities at the 79 primary schools and 38 secondary schools.

Perhaps then not surprisingly, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown has one of the highest rates of participation in sport and physical activity amongst those over the age of 16 in the country as highlighted in the “Irish Sports Monitor Annual Report 2023”. Further details on these participation levels are outlined later in this section.

In order to further develop its offering to citizens, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council has published a number of relevant strategic policy documents, governing sport and physical activity in the area. We have highlighted a number of these documents in this section.

The delivery of sport and physical activity in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown is due to the effort and support of a wide range of organisations and bodies including local sports clubs, statutory organisations at local and national level, education institutions, community groups and organisations, representative bodies, sports facilities providers, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council and the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Sports Partnership.

The structures in place to deliver the above, along with the strategic policy documents, current participation levels, and successes seen in this area, will be discussed in the following section.



ABOUT

Population growth focused on Ballyogan, Dundrum, Dún Laoghaire

233,860

TOTAL POPULATION IN 2022

(up from 218,018 in 2016), & projected to grow to at least **249,125 by Q1 2028**

350

OPEN SPACES

approximately 1,000 hectares



95

DLR GRASS PITCHES

14

OUTDOOR EXERCISE STATIONS

7

MAJOR PARKS

3

LEISURE CENTRES

41

PLAY GROUNDS

**OVER 300 SPORTS CLUBS
ACROSS 48 DIFFERENT SPORTS AND ACTIVITIES**

120 separate sporting facilities

in addition to those found in the 79 primary schools and 38 secondary schools in the County

58%

of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown residents **took part in sport** in the previous seven days (national average = 47%)

7%

of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown residents **classified as inactive** (national average = 12%)



33 Small Areas within Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown classified as disadvantaged or very disadvantaged (Pobal Deprivation Index 2016)

i) Key Stakeholders



KEY STAKEHOLDER

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown (dlr CoCo) Council

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council's vision is to provide infrastructure and programmes for community sports and active recreation that is sustainable, multi-purpose, and inclusive.

To better meet demand, coordinate the infrastructure for community sports and active recreation with an emphasis on the populations that most need it.

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

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Sports Development Office currently has the following staff:

- Sports Development Officer
- 2 x Administration
- Senior Sports Officer (UBU Funded Youth @ Risk 10yr-24yr)
- Sports Officer (UBU Funded Youth @ Risk 10yr-24yr)
- 2 x FAI Football Development Officers (co-funded)
- Part time Leinster Cricket Officer (co-funded)
- Leinster Rugby Community Rugby Officer (co-funded)
- Leinster Rugby Community Women's Rugby Officer (co-funded)

The Sports Development office links in with dlr Sports Partnership, dlr Leisure and other sections such as Community, Libraries, Active Travel, and Parks Capital projects.





KEY STAKEHOLDER

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown (dlr) Sports Partnership

The Local Sports Partnership (LSP) initiative was developed by Sport Ireland to create a national structure to coordinate and promote the development of sport and physical activity at a local level.

Established in 2008, the dlr Sports Partnership works closely with the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council's Sports Development Office and other key partners to promote participation, inclusion and coordination in sport and physical activity in the County.

The key tasks of the dlr Sports Partnership include:

- Building on the work already being carried out by partner agencies
- Establishing a sustainable structure to assist all those involved in local sports development (e.g. quality training)
- Rolling out Sport Ireland's participation programmes
- Increasing the usage of existing local resources
- Creating and implementing a strategic plan for long-term local sports and physical activity development

The dlr Sports Partnership is currently run by a team of six people comprised of the following roles:

- Sports Coordinator
- Programme Officer
- Acting Sports Inclusion Disability Officer
- Community Sports Development Officer
- Active Cities Officer
- Sports Marketing & Information Officer

The Board of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Sports Partnership is comprised of representatives from the key agencies and partners in the County with a remit for sport and physical activity. It oversees the leadership of the Sports Partnership, ensures good governance in all areas of its work and directs its staff to achieve the strategic vision and objectives of the organisation.

KEY STAKEHOLDER

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, (dlr) Leisure



Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, (dlr) Leisure, established in 2009, celebrated its 15th year in 2024 and currently operates three leisure centres in Loughlinstown, Meadowbrook, and Monkstown on behalf of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. It has annual usage across wet and dry programmes in excess of 700,000 visits. It currently employs 140 staff across the three facilities.

Within these centres, dlr Leisure is responsible for:

- Setting inclusive programmes across all facilities to cater for the full community profile, ages, and abilities
- Ensuring facilities, equipment and services develop as the world of exercise, fitness and wellness develops
- Strategic planning and development of the leisure facilities and its range of programmes and operations to deliver a premium customer experience
- Customer service
- Staff recruitment & development
- dlr Leisure facility upkeep
- Delivery of centre programmes

The management of dlr Leisure is overseen by a CEO and a board of directors consisting of nominated council officials and elected local governance representatives.



KEY STAKEHOLDER

Local Sports Clubs

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown is home to over 300 sports clubs across 48 different sports.

They are the most efficient and effective means of encouraging participation and play a vital role within their communities.

They are also the channel through which Government funding streams and National Governing Body programmes are often directed.

The relationship between the Council and the clubs is important in creating the best opportunity for delivering sporting opportunities and utilising council-owned sporting land and property.

KEY STAKEHOLDER

Volunteers

The Irish sporting landscape is built on a strong volunteer culture.

From sports clubs to Parkruns and one-off events to regular programmes, sport is at its sustainable best when a volunteer ethos is at its heart.

We want to ensure that volunteers are supported as well as possible through training and education.

The priorities of each of the above stakeholders are outlined in numerous policy documents and strategies which will be discussed in the following section.



ii) Current Sport & Physical Activity Policies

While the Council and Local Sports Partnership are responsible for the delivery of sport and physical activity, their actions are governed by various policy documents and strategies that seek to grow participation numbers sustainably and inclusively, whereas dlr Leisure's delivery of facility management is governed by the "dlr Leisure Strategy 2022-2027".

While there are a number of significant policy documents in this area, the key existing strategies and plans in this space over the last number of years and moving into the future are:

- **"Space to Play – Strategy for Sporting Facilities in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council 2017-2022"**
- **"Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Sports Participation Strategy 2018-2022"**
- **"Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council Play Policy 2023-2028"**

"Space to Play – Strategy for Sporting Facilities in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council 2017-2022"

Strategy objective: "Set a logical, deliverable pathway for the optimum use of existing, and development of new public sporting and physical activity facilities within the County."

The document acknowledged the constraints regarding the development of new facilities by being the most densely populated area outside Dublin city centre with land values that act as a barrier to private or club-based facility development. The strategy also noted it was not intended that any major development would 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.



“Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Sports Participation Strategy 2018-2022”

Strategy vision: “That everyone in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown has the opportunity to be physically active, having access to activities and facilities suitable for their interests, needs and capabilities, while enjoying the positive health and social benefits of that activity.”

The development of this strategic plan was a collaborative process including extensive consultation with sports clubs, volunteers/coaches, statutory agencies, disability groups, ethnic minority groups, schools and the public. At its core, this strategic plan embodied a community - led vision for participation in sport and physical activity based on leveraging off past successes and adopting a new framework for increasing participation in sport and physical activity across Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown.

The performance of this strategy, along with “Space to Play”, is discussed in the next section of the plan discussing current participation levels.



“Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council Play Policy 2023-2028”

Policy vision: “Play and recreation will be an inclusive, life-enhancing daily experience for everybody in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County.”

There is a natural overlap between sport & physical activity and play.

The Play Policy sets out strategic priorities for the County in increasing the numbers engaged in play outdoors, in an inclusive, collaborative, and sustainable way.

Given the natural pathway between engaging in play and progressing to further sport & physical activity, any plans in this area must also embrace those priorities.



“Space to Play” Recommendations

There were a number of key strategy findings made and the following reports on progress made since the report was published.

1. Large Hall Facility Development

Strategy Finding: “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”.

Subsequent Action Undertaken: Large hall facilities are being developed as part of the Saint Thomas’s and Samuel Beckett Civic Campus facilities development. Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council hopes to have the Tibradden facility in use by 2026 while it is envisaged that the remaining facility will be completed in the next two to three years.



2. Boxing/Martial Arts Facility Development

Strategy Finding: “There is demand from across a number of sports who share common space needs (Boxing, Martial Arts, Judo, Taekwondo etc.) and are likely to experience growth in the coming year”.

Subsequent Action Undertaken: dlr is developing a new combat facility in Monkstown which will accommodate a number of boxing rings, due to be completed by the end of 2024.

Development of this new combat facility may result in space becoming available in the Mounttown Community Facility which other clubs may be able to utilise.



3. School Partnerships Development

Strategy Finding: “It is recommended that future provision of required floodlit all weather surfaces be explored in partnership with schools, clubs that have access to non Council land”.

Subsequent Action Undertaken: A number of school partnerships have since successfully been implemented in Coláiste Eoin & Coláiste Íosagáin, Oatlands College, St Benildus School and Rosemont School with a fifth partnership planned for Woodbrook College.



4. Campus Facilities Development

Strategy Finding: “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”.

Subsequent Action Undertaken: Both the St. Thomas and Beckett Park facilities developments are working examples of the above. A key learning is the involvement of dlr in the planning process from beginning to end in order to maximise the benefit of multi facility usage.



5. Online Booking System Development

Strategy Finding: “Recommended that an online booking system for pitches and facilities be introduced.” The intention here was to monitor pitch usage and assist in the maintenance and optimisation of this usage.

Subsequent Action Undertaken: The planned online booking system has evolved into a broader facilities management system. Following a tender process, a new system has been developed while training on the new platform is underway with clubs. The new system will facilitate easier communication with clubs, allowing pitches to be brought back into circulation more easily. Clubs can also use the software to schedule training and other applications, ultimately saving them money currently being paid to other platforms. The platform can be extended beyond pitches to tennis courts, floodlights, clubhouses, changing rooms, toilets, etc.

In addition to the above, a number of grass pitches are being upgraded in line with recommendations from the “Space to Play” strategy to allow for more frequent use e.g. the GAA pitch at Kilbogget Park.



“Space To Play”

All five of the key recommendations made in “Space to Play” have either been achieved or are approaching the final stages of completion.

It must also be noted the important role the strategy played in structuring interactions between concerned stakeholders and Council staff, allowing for greater progress to be made in facility development.

This plan will seek to further structure these interactions around the places we engage in sport and physical activity, and ensure proper resources are in place to support the implementation of the recommendations and objectives discussed later in the document.

Other Relevant Strategic Plans/Policy Documents



Vision: “That everyone in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown has the opportunity to be physically active, having access to activities and facilities suitable for their interests, needs and capabilities while enjoying the positive health and social benefits of that activity.”



Wide reaching Development Plan for the County which includes policy objectives such as “Sports and Recreational Facilities”, “Protection of Sports Grounds/Facilities”, “Water-Based Sports”, “Walking and Cycling”, “Public Health” and “Open Space and Healthy Placemaking”. This document is in line with Development Plan objectives 8.5.1, 8.6.2 and 12.7.2.



Mission “dlr will be a vibrant place where people thrive and fulfil their potential in their local communities and neighbourhoods throughout their lives.”



Action: Priority for the Local Sports Plan is to “increase participation locally” in a way that is “consistent with the overall vision and objectives of this National Sports Policy”.



Corporate Goal 4: “Provide quality community, recreational, sporting and cultural opportunities for all who live, work and visit the County.”

Other documents reviewed include:

- Dublin Mountain Partnership Strategy 2022-2026
- Healthy Ireland Framework 2019-2025
- Healthy Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Plan 2019-2022
- National Physical Activity Plan for Ireland
- Sláintecare Action Plan 2023
- Sport Ireland Statement of Strategy 2018-2022
- Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018-2030

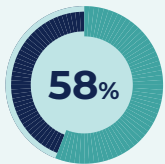
iii) Current Participation Levels

The 2023 Irish Sports Monitor conducted by Sport Ireland is a large population survey of sports participation and physical activity in Ireland by people aged 16 and over. Of the 8,512 respondents who completed the 2023 survey, 391 were from Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown. The following statistics are reported from secondary analysis of the responses provided by this sample of 391. The unweighted gender and age profile of the sample is summarised in the appendix for information.

The findings show that in 2023, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown was one of the most active counties in Ireland.

Here we compare data for Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown against the national picture for active and social participation in sport as well as broader physical activity.

1. ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN SPORT (2023 IRISH SPORTS MONITOR)



58% of the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown survey **respondents took part in sport in the previous seven days**, significantly higher than the national average of 47%.

As per the national picture, **men (63%) are more likely to take part in sport than women (53%)** in the County. The corresponding national rates are men (49%) and women (46%). Although female participation rates are higher than the national average, the difference between male and female participation rates in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown (10 pp) is greater than the national average (3 pp).



Younger age groups are more likely to take part in sport and exercise in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown

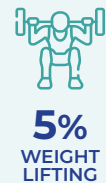
80% of those aged 16-24 compared to 38% of those aged 65 years or over.



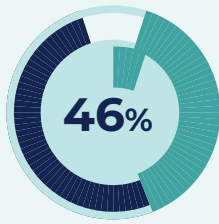
Those with a long-term illness or a disability (53%) are less likely to take part in sport and exercise in the County

than those with no illness or disability (60%).

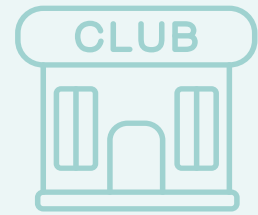
MOST POPULAR SPORTS & PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES IN DÚN LAOGHAIRE-RATHDOWN



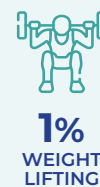
2. SOCIAL PARTICIPATION IN SPORT (2023 IRISH SPORTS MONITOR)



46% of respondents in Dún Laoghaire Rathdown belong to a club



THE MOST POPULAR CLUB MEMBERSHIPS WERE...



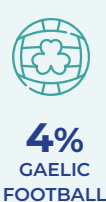
10% of respondents in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown volunteered in sport in the previous seven days, slightly below the national average (11%), with more men (12%) than women (9%) volunteering.

The most popular sports to volunteer in are GAA (4%), soccer (2%), golf (1%), hockey (1%), and rugby (1%).

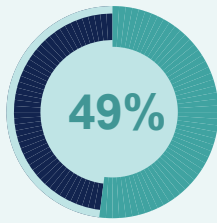


18% of respondents in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown attended a sporting event in the previous seven days, again slightly below the national average (20%). More men (21%) than women (14%) attended sporting events. **Attending sporting events is linked to children's sport**, with parents (36%) three times more likely to attend sporting events than non-parents (12%).

THE MOST POPULAR SPORTING EVENTS TO ATTEND ARE ...



3. BROADER PHYSICAL ACTIVITY (2023 IRISH SPORTS MONITOR)



Approximately half of the survey respondents in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown are highly active at 49%. This compares to 39% of the national population.

Also of note is the low percentage of inactive (7%) and sedentary behaviour (12%) in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown as compared to national averages (Inactive: 12%; Sedentary: 19%), largely due to the very high recreational walking rates in the County.



Almost eight in ten (78%) respondents **walked for recreation in the previous seven days** compared to the national average (69%), with women (80%) walking slightly more than men (75%).



Similar rates of recreational walking were reported by those with disabilities or long-term illness (82%), compared to the national average of 62%.

Half of respondents also walk for transport (52%) and one in seven (15%) cycle for transport, with men (19%) twice as likely to cycle for transport than women (10%).



4. DÚN LAOGHAIRE-RATHDOWN SPORTS PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME/ACTIVITY LEVELS (DLR SPORTS PARTNERSHIP)

We can also use the level of training courses, workshops and targeted physical activity programmes delivered by the dlr Sports Partnership within the County over a prolonged period of time as a barometer for the level of sports and physical activity within the area.

Activity	2013 - 2017	2018 - 2022
Participation Programmes & Events	20,000+ participants	60,000 participants
Training & Development (Coach/Volunteer)	4,300 volunteers	4,260 volunteers
Disability Sport	1,600+ participants	3,700+ participants
Ballyogan Sport & Physical Activity Hub	N/A	3,800+ participants

Source: Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Sports Participation Strategy 2018 – 2022 & Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Sports Partnership Strategic Review 2018 – 2022.

It should be noted that the static number of volunteers over this period is a relatively positive result as the pandemic had a significant negative impact on the level of volunteering nationally. The overall national volunteering rate for 2023 of 11% compares to pre-pandemic levels of 12% in 2019. Source: 2023 Irish Sports Monitor

However, the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Sports Partnership Strategic Review 2018 – 2022 also highlighted the areas where actions set out in the strategic plan had not progressed to a satisfactory level. These included “initiatives targeting ethnic minorities, meeting the level of need within the older adult population and sustainable supports for people with disabilities, in particular around the autism spectrum.

A number of contributory factors stated included “limitations on staff and financial resources, inability to reach these target groups and level of need/demand in other areas that equally required supports.”

As a result, these cohorts remain a key concern in the development of this Local Sport & Physical Activity Plan.



Active Cities

Sport Ireland's Active Cities project (funded through Dormant Accounts) is being delivered in Ireland's five largest cities – Dublin, Limerick, Waterford, Cork and Galway. The objective is the creating, maintaining and increasing numbers of citizens, regardless of age and ability, participating in sport and physical activity in their city. Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown is working closely with its Dublin local authority partners to work towards achieving Global Active Cities status over the next few years.

The project is based on the World Health Organisation's Global Action Plan on Physical Activity (GAPPA) Framework, which focuses on increasing physical activity amongst those who are least active in society. It is not just the responsibility of people working in sport and physical activity to address this. Active Cities Dublin is about all stakeholders, who directly and indirectly impact on physical activity, collectively driving change through collaboration, partnership, and planning.

With ambitious aims to be among the most physically active and healthy places in the world, it is vital that a multi-sectoral approach is taken to delivering this in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, across Dublin and nationally.

Many stakeholders have a pivotal role to play in the success of Active Cities Dublin and in prioritising physical activity for ALL which is reflected in the four guiding pillars; Active Systems, Active Environments, Active Societies and Active People.



Local Sports & Physical Activity Plan – New dlr Facilities Development

With the very high levels of participation in dlr and the lack of available or suitable public land, dlr must innovate to ensure facilities are available to the local communities and clubs. Sports facility development has increased in recent years to capitalise on the available funding from central government and to try to keep up with the demand from clubs and communities.

Many of these facilities and innovations have arisen from the previous sports facilities strategy, “Space to Play” and more are now required to ensure we can support and encourage the citizens of dlr to be active. Many of the facilities recently delivered are also freely available for public use when not used formally by the clubs. The facilities being developed are generally very inclusive and accessible for all.



Partnership & Sharing:

Sharing facilities between clubs and different sports will continue to be a requirement. There are now multiple examples throughout the County where sports clubs are sharing pitches, changing pavilions, etc.

A partnership approach with clubs, schools and dlr leisure services will be a focus going forward with other partnership opportunities to also be explored. dlr are developing high quality sports facilities for their use to be maximised and sharing is a key aspect of that.

With regard to the development of all weather facilities, the Council will continue to work with schools to identify suitable locations and investigate the feasibility of other locations, subject to needs analysis. These facilities will be developed and managed by the Council to ensure community access.



Facility Type:

With the increasing construction costs for sports facility development, these assets need to be managed in an intensive manner to maximise usage. In addition, the facilities must be designed to have a high degree of flexibility in order for them to facilitate the different uses and be future proofed for other activities. They must also be designed so that they can be managed in an efficient manner in order for them to be self sustaining. There is recently a new focus on informal sport and physical activity with the provision of functional workout zones (calisthenics), skills walls, mugas, small basketball courts/ areas, skate parks, pump tracks, etc being delivered throughout the County.



Policy & Plans:

The delivery of the sports facilities in dlr is rooted in policy, surveys and plans. Masterplans are in place for many of our regional parks and facilities are being developed on a phased basis. This avoids a piecemeal approach where mistakes can be made at considerable cost. The integration of sports facilities into our parks and open spaces is a high priority and often tree planting, development of meadows and other biodiversity related measures are delivered with the facilities. The introduction of additional seating, refillable water fountains, play, viewing areas, etc is also an important aspect of the project delivery.



The design, procurement and construction of the public sports facilities are generally delivered within the Parks capital projects team. The team is putting in place plans around public procurement and other means to accelerate the delivery of suitable sports facilities. The team is limited in human resources and needs to be resourced appropriately to ensure facilities are delivered to fulfil the vision of this plan.

Current Participation Levels – Conclusion

When it comes to participation, the numbers are overwhelmingly positive, albeit with specific areas for improvement.

However, participation numbers do not tell the full story.

In order to properly evaluate the condition of sport and physical activity, an extensive consultation process was conducted.



iv) Consultation

The consultation process consisted of meetings with special interest groups, sports clubs, councillors, a public Town Hall meeting and an online public survey.

Each was conducted to gather the views and opinions of the volunteers, staff, communities, and participants, each of whom are crucial to the delivery and success of sport and physical activity in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown.

Internal stakeholders

- dlr Sports Partnership Board & staff
- dlr Council staff across a range of areas including Active Travel, Community, Libraries, Parks, and Sports Development
- dlr Community, Culture & Wellbeing Strategic Policy Committee
- Dún Laoghaire Area Council Meeting
- Dundrum Area Council Meeting
- Councillors Group Special Meeting



External stakeholders



Sport Ireland

Meeting with Sport Ireland to determine ways in which the local authority can benefit from the development of the “Get Ireland Active Database”.

Special Interest Groups



Women & Girls in Sport
Key takeaway - “Nothing about us without us.”



Disabilities
Key takeaway - “Integrating those with a disability into mainstream sport and clubs.”



Disadvantaged Youth
Key takeaway - “Creating space to be young, and transport to enable people get there.”



Older Adults
Key takeaway - “Adapted sports enabling re-entry to social activity.”



Ethnic Minorities
Key takeaway - “Education for a more welcoming approach from mainstream clubs.”



Traveller Community
Key takeaway - “Work within the traveller culture, as opposed to taking away from it.”



Public Town Hall Meeting:

Over 100 representatives from more than 30 different sports engaged in an initial discussion on key priorities to be developed within this plan, leading to more extensive discussion in the ensuing focus groups.



Online Public Survey:

The citizens of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown were asked for their views via an online survey conducted by Core Research and hosted on Council owned platforms/ channels with a print copy version also made available. The survey attracted 748 respondents and the key findings are outlined later in this section.



Local Sports Focus Groups:

Representatives from local sports clubs came together to share views on their experiences, highlighting potential opportunities and challenges. The groups were comprised of the following sports:

- **Indoor sports** - Gymnastics, Volleyball, Badminton & Ten-Pin Bowling
- **Water sports** - Sailing, Rowing, Kayaking, Swimming & Wind Surfing
- **Individual sports** - Running, Cycling, Tennis & Triathlon
- **Field sports** - Gaelic Games, Football, Rugby & Hockey



Consultation Insights from Key Stakeholder Groups

Following this consultation process, suggestions for building on the already considerable foundation of sports and physical activity participation in the County emerged under several key areas:

1. Inclusion

Accessibility to sport and physical activity, not just from a transport perspective, but also as sport for all, was a key point of feedback both from the in person and online consultations.

Four key areas of focus/improvement were identified:

AGE

- Drop off in participation from primary to secondary school, particularly with teenage girls, as well as for older adults.
- Transport issues are a key disabler for getting children involved in activities after school.
- Older adults need programmes that are sustainable. Adapted sporting events should be encouraged and properly communicated to interested parties/individuals.



GENDER

- Concentrating on narrowing the participation gap between men and women.
- Including women in the decision-making process for sports and physical activity planning and policy making.
- Safety and access are key concerns.



DISABILITY

- Focus on prioritising accessibility and fostering collaboration.
- Coordinating the efforts of those working within individual clubs and sports e.g. coaches, parents, facility providers, or special interest groups.



ETHNICITY

- Covering both new communities and the Traveller community.
- Need to encourage greater integration by providing opportunities for 'new communities' to become a part of their new community.
- Creating safe spaces for those in the Traveller community to get involved and empower leaders from within this community to build trust.



Peer led sessions in an open, accessible, space were proposed as an inclusive way to encourage participation for several groups.

Emphasis on the health benefits of sport and physical activity emerged as a good way to encourage those not already participating to do so.



2. Communications



Awareness levels of Local Sports Partnership and Council initiatives are good, but the figure falls when accounting for those who know exactly what the Local Sports Partnership and Council do.

A desire for greater collaboration with clubs, organisations, NGB's, volunteers, and participants was voiced during each focus group and stakeholder consultation session held.

Resourcing is an issue, contributing to tension points. The Local Sports Partnership is already hiring a specific communications role, but the Council needs to follow this example. A few stakeholders have made suggestions on how this can be improved through greater allocation of human resources in the plan.

3. Volunteers/Coaching



Volunteers are currently doing an excellent job of growing and sustaining sport and physical activity in the area.

Main concern is upskilling to ensure they are equipped to deal with new groups and groups with specific needs.

Need to formalise the relationship between club volunteers and the Council to allow for efficiencies and accountability.

4. Amenities



More efficient use of existing amenities and ensuring availability all year round.

Provision of toilet and baby changing facilities, proper accessibility for those with disabilities and required storage facilities for sports equipment.

Multisport markings needed to ensure most efficient use of space.

Improvement of existing public amenities such as parks, footpaths, and active travel cycle routes to allow for continued individual and group use – safety and lighting are main concerns.

Improved swimming facilities.

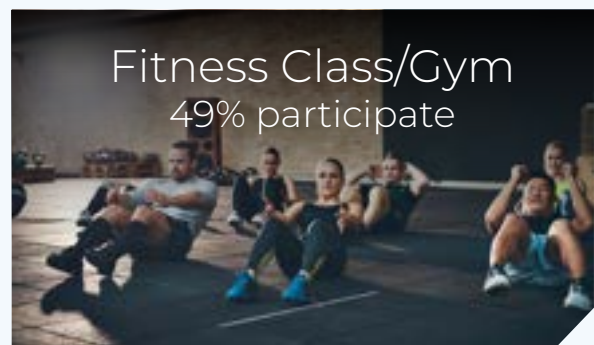
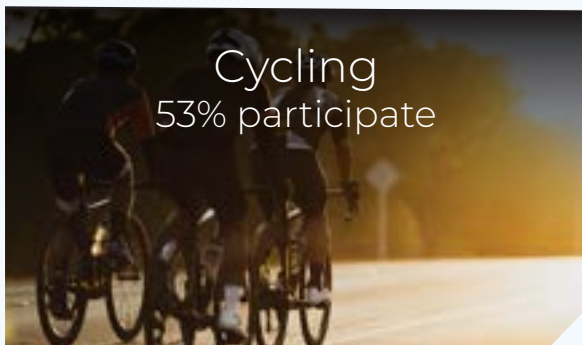
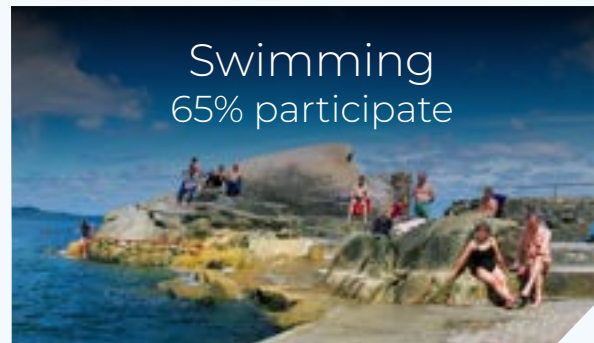
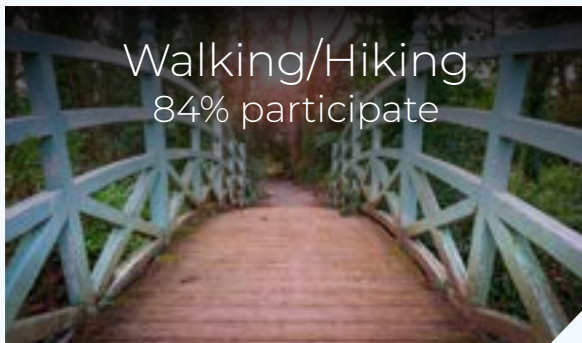
Better access to slipways to allow better use of the coastline.

Online survey

An online research survey was conducted by Core Research via Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council owned platforms/channels while a paper version of the questionnaire was also made available. As a result, the sample is self-selecting and not fully representative of the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown population. The response levels skewed to an AB social grade and towards those aged 45-54.

However, the individual cohorts can still be examined for insights, and the analysis complements the findings from the stakeholder and focus group consultations.

The most popular activities in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown are:

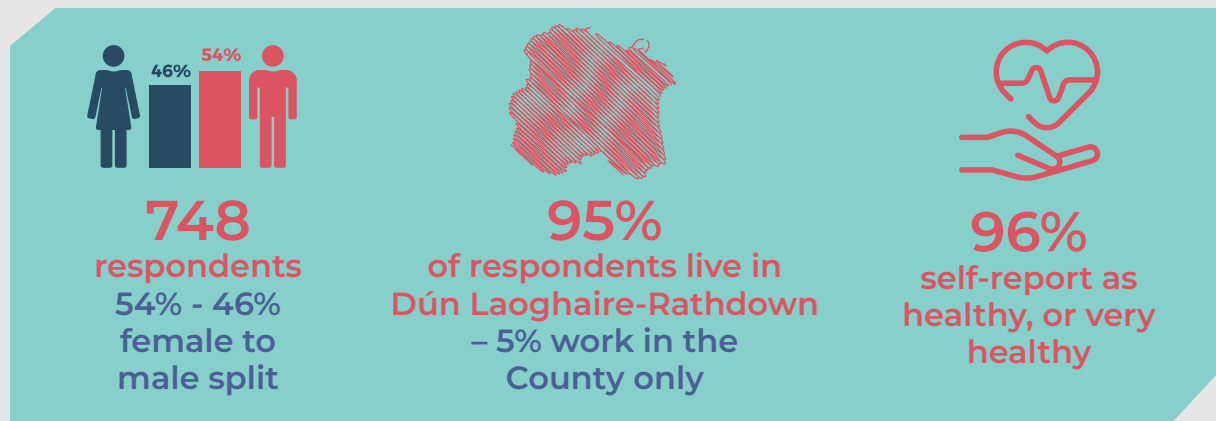


There is strong local support for further initiatives and supports from the Council and Local Sports Partnership for sport and physical activity. Self-reported health and activity levels are high, mirroring the findings of the Irish Sports Monitor 2023 Annual Report.

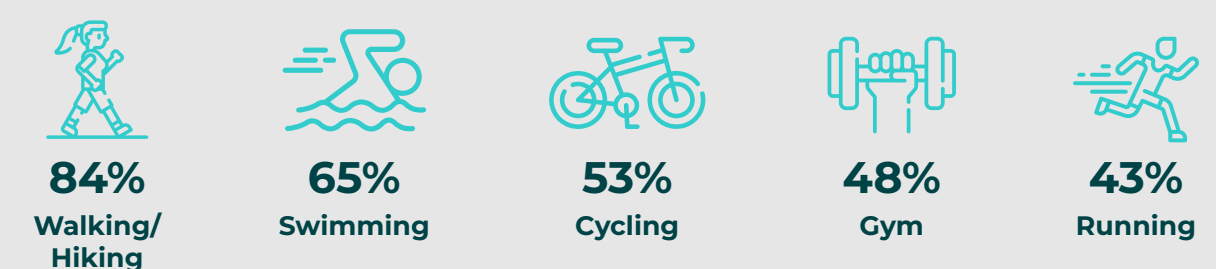
The most common location for participation in sport and physical activity is basic infrastructure such as public parks and roads/footpaths, emphasising the importance of improving the quality and safety of this infrastructure. Public transport accessibility was highlighted as the largest area for improvement regarding amenities, with 1 in 4 respondents stating this was an obstacle to participation. Broad public support reported for accessibility of amenities for all, and that any Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown amenities should be cognisant of the diverse range of abilities and needs.

While awareness levels of amenities available fluctuates, those who are aware report high levels of participation. There is an opportunity to grow participation levels here simply by communicating the existence of resources to a wider group. Cost of access and membership fees is the number one barrier to taking part in sport and physical activity in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, exacerbated by the current cost of living crisis.

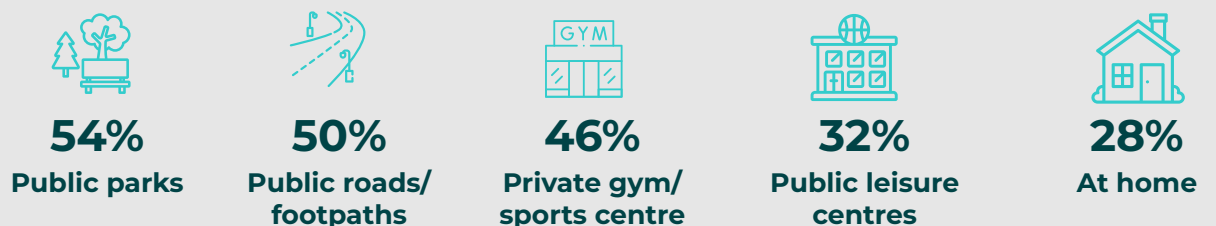
Summary of Research Results (Core Research)



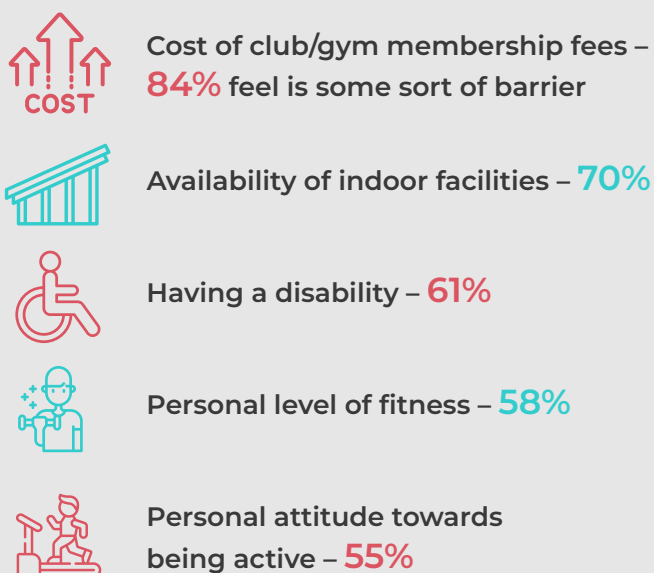
Top Activities among adults only – general participation



Where residents who participate in sports/physical activity take part

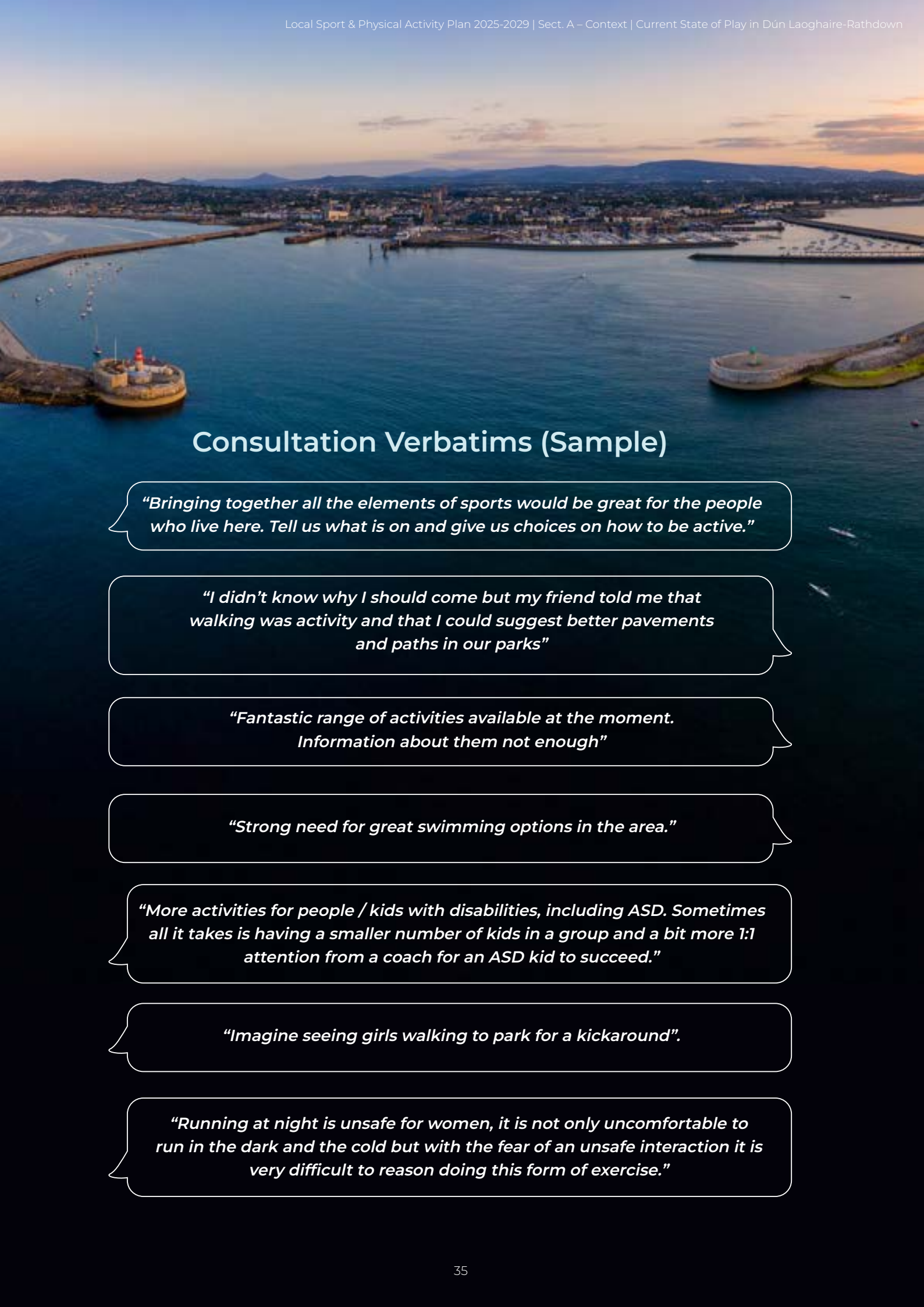


Barriers to participation in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown



Local Sports Partnership (LSP) Awareness levels:





Consultation Verbatims (Sample)

"Bringing together all the elements of sports would be great for the people who live here. Tell us what is on and give us choices on how to be active."

"I didn't know why I should come but my friend told me that walking was activity and that I could suggest better pavements and paths in our parks"

"Fantastic range of activities available at the moment. Information about them not enough"

"Strong need for great swimming options in the area."

"More activities for people / kids with disabilities, including ASD. Sometimes all it takes is having a smaller number of kids in a group and a bit more 1:1 attention from a coach for an ASD kid to succeed."

"Imagine seeing girls walking to park for a kickaround"

"Running at night is unsafe for women, it is not only uncomfortable to run in the dark and the cold but with the fear of an unsafe interaction it is very difficult to reason doing this form of exercise."

Current State of Play – Conclusion

The previous five years (and the years prior) have left a significant base for further improvements in the delivery of sport and physical activity to be made.

While the overwhelming narrative from all stakeholders concerned is that the overall job being done is a good one, there are key areas that need greater focus over the next five years.

This plan includes a number of recommendations and possible opportunities that could be implemented to further develop participation in sport and physical activity in the County, based on the research and consultations discussed above.



Overall Review Findings

As mentioned by the dlr Sports Partnership, a specific focus on key target groups is still needed to boost participation in line with the broader population.

Ensuring support for those delivering sport and physical activity already e.g. coaches, volunteers, staff, will be crucial over the lifetime of this plan. These individuals are crucial to both the everyday running of sport and physical activity programmes, as well as the push to developing an inclusive sport for all approach.

There is a need to efficiently and sustainably use available space in order to increase participation alongside predicted future population growth. Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown's place between the mountains and the sea means simply building and developing new areas for participation is neither feasible nor sufficient.

A central point of reference for sport and physical activity is needed to streamline the way numerous stakeholders engage with the Council and the LSP. A sample organogram is attached to this plan to outline how this plan might interact with the various internal and external stakeholders. However further staff resources are also needed.

While good work is being done, greater communication of achievements is needed to celebrate the work of those delivering sport and physical activity programmes, as well making the general population aware of the activities and amenities available to them.

Given the work done previously, and the base on which to build for the next five years, there are several suggested programmes and policies that Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown can put in place to be the leading County in Ireland for sport and physical activity.

These broad findings can be organised into four key themes, which are discussed along with the corresponding objectives in the following section.





SECTION B
**THEMES &
OBJECTIVES**



i) People - Enabling A More Active Population

Sport comes in many forms and diversity is important to provide people with the chance of finding what works for them.

There are almost 48 recognised sporting bodies with clubs or facilities in the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown area, but it is equally important to be mindful of those not attracted to clubs or communal activities but who still have a desire to be active.

The National Physical Activity Plan highlights that adults of every age and those with disabilities should be engaging in at least 30 minutes of physical activity every day. For some that fit the 'sporty' profile this is understood and undertaken, but for many others help is needed by way of providing access to facilities and programmes that can spark interest and then become self-sustaining.

Physical activity does not always fit in the constraints of being competitive. The provision of walking as well as cycling paths which give people confidence to use them more falls within the remit and control of the local authority and greater levels of planning and communication are required to make maximum benefit of what is taking place beyond the sporting world.

Local Sports Partnership

The Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Sports Partnership (LSP) team has done well to deliver effective programmes with enthusiasm. At a board level the LSP is an important forum for expanding on the collaborative themes that underpin this plan. While other local authorities are folding the operation of the LSP more closely into the executive function, there remains value in maintaining the LSP in its current form and indeed boosting its effectiveness by expanding the staff working in it.

As is highlighted in the "Delivery" theme, the LSP is working at less than optimum capacity with places funded by Sport Ireland unfilled.

The main priority in getting people active will be in getting people willing to assist.

Support for coaching and volunteer programmes through the LSP in partnership with Sport Ireland is an important part of recommendations here as without people the plans will fade. Volunteer numbers have lagged behind participation numbers in the climb back from Covid and this needs to be addressed.

A minimum requirement is that a position be tasked with researching and sourcing the multiple existing national and European funding streams to develop sport and physical activity, often targeted at the harder to reach groups.

The Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown SportsFest

Providing a focus for all sports to come together is as old as the Olympic Games and has stood the test of time.

With the right resource Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown could host a SportsFest over the course of a week with themed days and a sense of occasion.

Serving as a platform to bring people from different sports and different backgrounds working together to create something that can relight an interest in physical activity in some, attract others that have never seen themselves in sport before and provide a strong annual platform for Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown to stand at the centre of collaborative activity.

Creating sport and physical activity opportunity for all

A primary role of the local authority is to reach out to those populations that have been traditionally excluded from sporting engagement and to those with additional needs via the provision of tailored programmes and through enabling and educating clubs and groups to allow those populations to be included within existing local sporting activities.

Having consulted widely across different special interest groups, a number of common themes emerged, a number of which merit further detail.



Women & Girls

Women's sport and physical activity has too long been a poor relation of the equivalent for men. Thankfully this is changing and fast with the greatest growth in sports participation coming among women and girls.

We are recommending that every sporting club or organisation in receipt of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown funding, pitch provision or support must have a written equality statement and provide equal access to men's and women's teams to its facilities.

This is already a requirement for the National Sports Capital Grant scheme and should be equally applied to all Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown funding and activity.

While this may pose difficulty for some that have never provided an option for women to get involved, it is proposed here that within 12 months no funding or support be offered to those not operating equal access.

Continued effort should be put into women specific sporting programmes run through the Local Sports Partnership and there should also be close communication with the network of Women in Sport Officers in most National Governing Bodies that are funded by Sport Ireland.

At a practical level, a recurring theme emerging in the consultation process surrounded the provision of toilet facilities. Some sports have rules determining that matches can only be played at pitches where there are toilet facilities.

Toilet facilities generally and specifically at pitches should be taken as given and accessible to all.



Persons with a Disability

One of the most positive consultation meetings was with those who are providing sport and physical activity opportunities to persons with a disability. The dedication from those working in an almost exclusively voluntary capacity is incredible and we were left with the very clear imperative that these are people we need to support through the local authority in whatever way that we can.

Bringing them together as part of a “Disability Sport Forum” has immense value as the learning to be gained from shared experience is something that is highly beneficial. Making sure that training in terms of inclusive thinking is introduced across the different touchpoints with council services is another area that can be implemented to very positive impact.

The mainstreaming of sport and physical activity through existing clubs and in existing sports and play facilities is the optimum way to tap into the well of goodwill within clubs to ‘do the right thing’ but also to make people with a disability feel welcome within their own communities.



Disadvantaged Youth

Engagement with this audience involved meeting with teachers and volunteers as well as the housing department to determine the best way to address the needs of those children and young people who fall outside of the school and club-based sporting provision. 96% of primary school aged children do have access to physical activity sessions but two barriers that exist for some are transport and the cost of taking part.

The provision of a community bus service which could be booked by different groups to take children to and from activity sessions was another request that should be explored. Access to temporary accommodation facilities is difficult and ways should be explored to make it easier to provide play opportunities for children in these circumstances. The question of a physical space for older children to gather in ‘off the streets’ arose in consultation a number of times and the potential of existing sports clubs providing a social ‘hang out’ space beyond the provision of just the sport could be a winning community initiative. The greater population shift from house with gardens to apartment living makes it even more important to provide public space amenities where physical activities can take place. The ‘No Ball Games Allowed’ signage of times past should be monitored carefully to make the best use of space.

Older Adults

Providing safe space for walking will encourage a proportion of older adults to remain mobile but more can be done. Adapted sport is becoming much more accepted with programmes including walking football scoring well with older adults.

Communal based open facilities offering more gentle sporting pursuits, such as the pétanque courts built in several locations across the County, have filled for membership when opened, suggesting a greater need and a real demand for new activities.

8-80 sports like Tennis have also been referenced for their appeal to older adults and the creation of age specific programmes echoing the ones targeting youth.



Ethnic Minorities

Discussions with representatives of ethnic minorities highlighted the community building potential of enabling sport as a bonding tool. That said the focus should be on greater integration rather than segregation.

Solving the provision of large indoor sports facilities can enable sports such as volleyball (where 74% of Volleyball Ireland adult members were born abroad (Source: Sport Ireland)) to flourish and encourage all nationalities to get involved. Other sports including cricket have a strong appeal to different ethnic groups and are covered in the sport-by-sport analysis part of this document.

Traveller Community

The consultation with the Traveller community illustrated the challenges faced in being active but also by the enthusiasm to overcome them.

One area with real potential is for the Council to support a programme, perhaps a regional or national competition in Gaelic Handball which is seen as the primary sport among the community. This will not solve the problems of integration that face the community every day but can enable a greater sense of belonging through supporting a culturally important sport.

Objectives - People

Goals	Objectives	Measurement	Lead	Responsibility/ Partner	Timeframe
Celebrate the offering and scale of sport and physical activity in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown	1.1.1 Establish Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown SportsFest	Annual celebration	LSP/ dlr Sports	LSP/dlr Sports	2025
Increase number of targeted sport and physical activity programmes available in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown	1.2.1 Expand on existing participation initiatives offered in the County that will include all ages, abilities and backgrounds	Increase number of people meeting national guidelines on physical activity and sport (National Sports Policy) to reach and exceed the NSP 2027 target of 50%	LSP/ dlr Sports	dlr CoCo	Ongoing
Continue to support and enable the existing work of volunteers in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown	1.3.1 Increase supports and training on offer to volunteers in conjunction with Sport Ireland/Volunteer Centre	Increase number of volunteers from 9% to 11%	LSP/dlr Sports/ NGBs	LSP/dlr Sports/ NGBs	2025
Support club capacity to integrate disadvantaged groups into their clubs	1.4.1 Establish forum for inclusion related material and expertise to meet quarterly and establish guidelines for support	Quarterly Meeting	LSP/dlr Sports	Sport Ireland, clubs, Sports Forum	2025
Increase collaboration between the Council, LSP, clubs, schools, special interest groups, NGBs, general public - highlighting best practice.	1.5.1 Open invitation to NGB's to discuss and collaborate	One programme a year held in collaboration with NGB's	LSP/dlr	dlr Sports, NGBs	2025
	1.5.2 Use Active Cities funding to develop greater collaboration on programmes and initiatives across all four Dublin Sports Partnerships	One additional Active Cities collaboration carried out yearly (working with NGB)	dlr Sports / LSP	dlr Sports	Ongoing

Objectives - People

Goals	Objectives	Measurement	Lead	Responsibility/ Partner	Timeframe
Women in Sport	1.6.1 Implementation of written equality statement by any club/organisation in receipt of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown funding in line with existing policies concerning disabilities and child protection	In place by 1 st June 2026	dlr Sports / LSP	NGB's, Clubs	2026 - 2027
	1.6.2 Additional programmes/ initiatives to be put in place specifically targeting young girls and women, e.g. "Her Moves", Sport Ireland initiatives, working with NGB's	Increase percentage of women taking part in sport to be in line with male participation by 2028	LSP	dlr Sports, NGB's	Ongoing
	1.6.3 Upskill volunteers/ coaches in how to work with young girls/women		LSP	Clubs, NGB's	Ongoing
Disabilities Sport & Physical Activity	1.7.1 Additional programmes/ initiatives to be put in place specifically targeting those with disabilities, with special focus on the Summer months	Increase percentage of people with disabilities taking part in sports & physical activity to be more in line with people without disabilities by 2028.	LSP	dlr Sports, Clubs,	Ongoing
	1.7.2 Upskill volunteers/ coaches in how to work with those with disabilities		LSP	Clubs, NGB's, disability services	Ongoing
	1.7.3 Installation of inclusive play equipment into existing playground facilities		dlr Parks	dlr Community, LSP	Ongoing
	1.7.4 Hosting Disability Sport Forums to allow for a space where volunteers can meet with schools/ clubs that have facilities available for those with disabilities		LSP	Clubs, disability services, special schools	2025

Objectives - People

Goals	Objectives	Measurement	Lead	Responsibility/ Partner	Timeframe
Disadvantaged Youth	1.8.1 Additional programmes/ initiatives to be put in place specifically targeting disadvantaged youth	Improve health outcomes for young people in line with Goal 1 Objective 3 of the “UBU Your Place Your Space Policy”	LSP/dlr Sports	Crosscare, schools, NGB's, ETB	Ongoing
	1.8.2 Link in with existing community transport providers, e.g. Garda Diversion and “Crosscare”, and identify relevant areas of improvement for Council involvement		dlr Community	dlr Sports, LSP	2025
	1.8.3 Explore possibility of teen spaces in existing sports clubs beyond the provision of just sport		dlr Sports	dlr Community, dlr Parks, Active Cities, Fóroige, Crosscare	2025
Increase level of general participation in sport and physical activity in disadvantaged areas in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown	1.9.1 Build specific programming around designated areas as per the Deprivation Index - in consultation with community about their specific needs.	Set up and implement research tracking scheme (before and after measures)	Active Cities	LSP, dlr Sports	Ongoing
	1.9.2 Remove barrier of cost for access to dlr Services of most vulnerable groups	A recommendation is to establish supports to assist groups in availing of general leisure facilities. Specifically designed programmes aimed at specific target groups should be included so that the material benefits of participation can be felt by all.	dlr CoCo	dlr Community, dlr Sports	2025

Objectives - People

Goals	Objectives	Measurement	Lead	Responsibility/ Partner	Timeframe
Older People	1.10.1 Additional programmes/ initiatives to be put in place specifically targeting older people in collaboration with Age Friendly dlr with a focus on adaptable sports	Increase percentage of older people taking part in sport and physical activity in line with and exceeding national targets	LSP	dlr Community, dlr Sports, dlr Parks, Age Friendly Alliance	Ongoing
	1.10.2 Support the work and delivery of the Age Friendly Strategy awareness initiatives specifically targeting this group (mindful of most relevant channels)		LSP	dlr Sports	Ongoing
	1.10.3 Pilot programmes to be established to support and incentivise clubs to involve older adults where appropriate		LSP	dlr Community, dlr Sports, Clubs.	Ongoing
	1.10.4 “Green Prescription” - more of these programmes more often in more places - subsidised at beginning (building awareness of physical activity's link to physical health)		HSE	LSP, dlr Sports, dlr Community	2025
Ethnic Minorities	1.11.1 Communications initiatives/ strategy to be put in place specifically targeting this group	Increase in no. of targeted programmes and participants	LSP	Ethnic Minority Integration Forum, dlr Community, dlr Sports,	2025
	1.11.2 Encourage multi-sport facilities to provide access for all - with a particular focus on sports popular in other countries.		dlr CoCo	dlr Parks, dlr Sports, LSP	2026 - 2027
	1.11.3 Exploration of potential support for participation initiatives in partnership with the Traveller community in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown		LSP	STAG, dlr Sports, dlr Community	2025

ii) Places - The Facilities We Use

The places we are active in are a crucial element of the plan and can broadly be divided into five areas – pitches and specific outdoor sports facilities, indoor spaces to cater for multiple sports, the parks and environment that is all around us, dlr Leisure facilities and swimming pools, and uniquely for Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, Dún Laoghaire Harbour.

Sport infrastructure in Ireland has largely moved past an ad-hoc, make-do type approach and this has had a positive impact on growing and sustaining participation. Sporting infrastructure needs to be designed, located, built, maintained and operated to appropriate standards if we are to make real advances in involving the harder to reach target groups.

The Harbour

One area where there is another clear and present opportunity is in utilising the unique benefit of the harbour and supporting the creation of the National Water Sports Campus in Dún Laoghaire.

This is a nationally funded project that at the time of writing is going to the design stage but can transform the unique facility that exists in the County for the provision of water sport.

Access to the water is an issue that arose consistently in this plan's consultation process and getting multiple stakeholders together as part of the design phase to incorporate safe and accessible use of the slipways will be a key element.

Multiple sports from sailing and rowing to kayaking and windsurfing should feel welcome as they bring life to the area.



dlr Leisure and Swimming Pools

dlr Leisure is the separate entity charged with delivering the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown owned sporting facilities. The provision of these is at a high standard and on a par at least with any other around the country.

A recommendation is to establish supports to assist groups in availing of general leisure facilities. Specifically designed programmes aimed at specific target groups should be included so that the material benefits of participation can be felt by all.



Indoor Facilities

There is a clear gap in the provision of indoor services and support facilities such as changing rooms and storage. This document is mindful that additional money is being made available from central Government for the St. Thomas and Samuel Beckett facilities.

St. Thomas in particular provides a template on how the local authority as the lead partner can collaborate with lead clubs and multiple other potential sporting stakeholders to deliver a fit for purpose facility that can act as a template across the country.



Parks and Open Space

Our parks are a facility for the whole population and cannot be considered only as areas that are there to be developed with traditional sports facilities. A significant majority of the population are excluded from pitches but are important to consider when it comes to places where they can walk, jog or rest as part of their personal activity.

Maintenance of safe pathways with appropriate lighting and signage is an important area to get right. This can be achieved relatively quickly and gives confidence that parks are a safe environment. The provision of more public toilet facilities is also recommended, with signage pointing to where they will be located and how far away they are. A standard should be considered for planning these facilities as a part of all our parks.



The Mountains

The mountains that border the County to the West and the South are a vast resource for healthy physical activity in a natural setting.

Walking trails and hiking strategies introduced by Sport Ireland are intended to encourage access across all age groups and regardless of other sporting engagement. Horse trails are also a key feature of the environment.

It is recommended that greater access to the mountains for those using public transport be investigated so that this great untapped resource can be opened up in the lifetime of this strategy. Specific reference to developing the mountains for public use within the new County Tourism Strategy is welcomed and should support the work being done by the Dublin Mountains Partnership.



Pitches

The greatest number of young people are active through team sports and that requires pitches.

This plan acknowledges that space in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown is at a premium and it remains important to make more efficient use of what we have.

Through the online booking system, it will be possible to make better use of the pitch network.

The lessons and data that will come to light through the initial two years of the booking system being in operation will paint a clear picture of usage by individual clubs and sports and point out where more can be freed up at different times of the week or the year.

The policy shift towards creating multi-sport facilities in partnership between the local authority, schools and sports clubs has worked well and will continue to do so as more come on stream.

It is important that, in keeping with national policy, facilities should be viable for multi-sport use. As this applies to pitches, they should be built to allow for a number of field sports from the larger size needed for Gaelic Games through football and rugby, hockey and more general training.

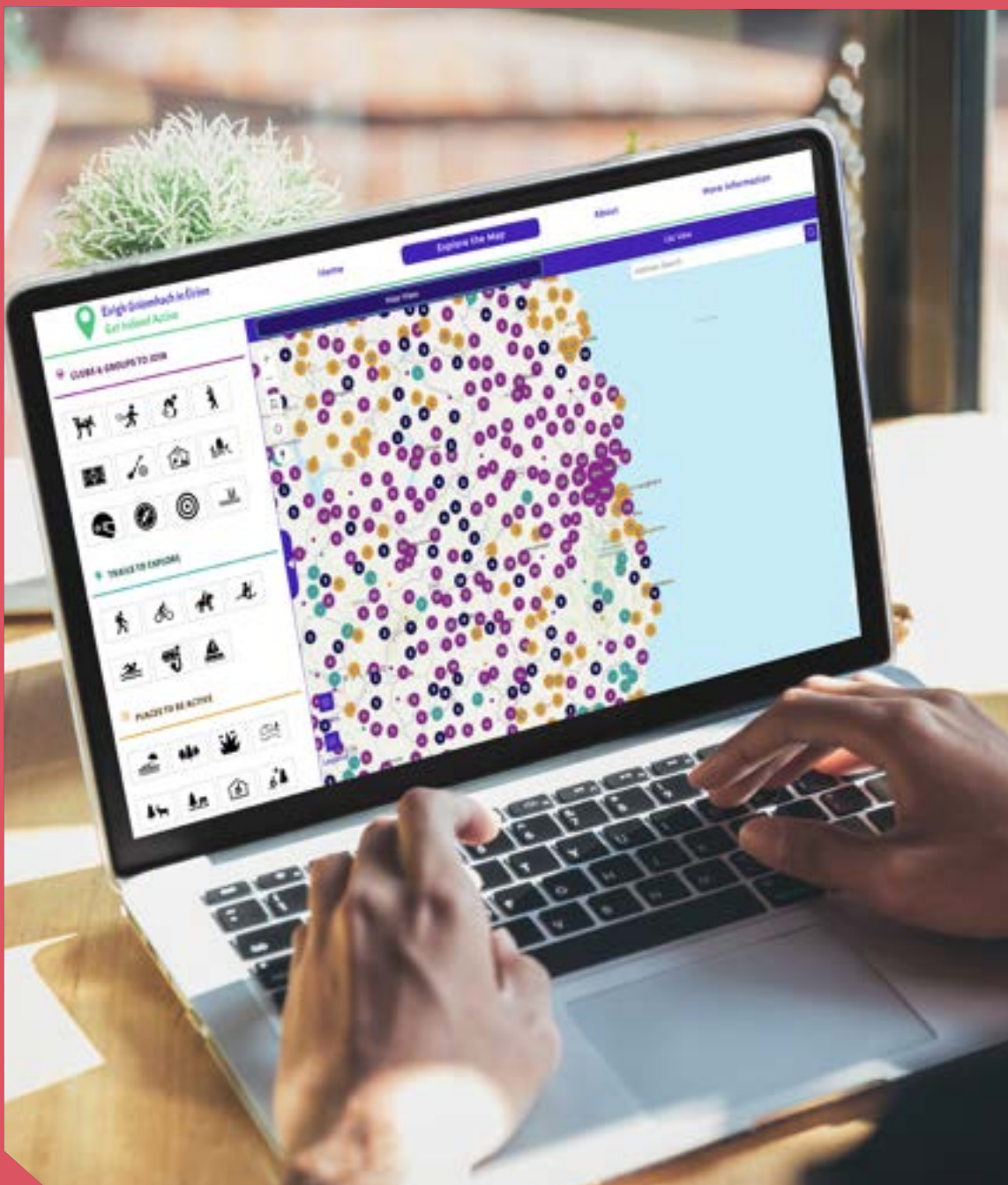
Advances in pitch technology are continually being introduced and these will create greater levels of use while not impacting the environment in the way that initial 'plastic' pitches did. Maintenance plans should be agreed on an annual basis.



"Get Ireland Active" Database for Planning

The new "Get Ireland Active" database from Sport Ireland is a valuable resource that is only now becoming available to local authorities, sporting organisations and the general public. It has mapped all the sport and activity locations across the country in a searchable database.

As it is rolled out over the coming months and years there will be layers visible only to local authority planners enabling the modelling of population shifts, housing, and transport development so that physical activity can be planned in from the beginning rather than added after the event.



Sustainability

There is a view that a green space is just a sports facility waiting to be developed.

While pitches are at a premium and needed with rising activity levels particularly among women and girls, we need to be mindful that sport exists within a wider context.

Parks are spaces that are open to all and need to be inclusive rather than devoted only to those who play team sports.

This document suggests changes to the way in which parks and public infrastructure is available for activity but striving to ensure that these do not come at a cost in environmental terms.

Environmental sustainability should be factored in at an initial stage when investigating facility upgrades and future development.

The latest in more sustainable pitch provision and maintenance should always be adopted so as to lessen the environmental impact.



Objectives - Places

Goals	Objectives	Measurement	Lead	Responsibility/ Partner	Timeframe
Improve existing water-based sports facilities in Dún Laoghaire -Rathdown	2.1.1 Support the development of the National Water Sports Campus to be located at Dún Laoghaire Harbour. This will provide additional facilities and an event arena to the benefit of participants, elite athletes and local tourism	Monitor developments with the Campus working group and the funding from the Government Large Scale Sports Infrastructure Fund with annual milestones	dlr Harbour	Harbour User Group, dlr Sports, DTCAGSM	2028-2029
	2.1.2 Allocate parking close to slipways for protected use for those who can only transport equipment via car, e.g. kayaks	Conversion of a number of spaces by each slipway/entry point to the water	dlr Harbour	dlr CoCo	2026 - 2027
	2.1.3 Provide storage facilities for water sports users	Inclusion in building of Water Sports Campus	dlr Harbour	Harbour User Group, Clubs	2028-2029
Maximise indoor facilities through multi-sport use	2.2.1 Plan development of at least one other large indoor facility as best in class examples of modern, new, multi-sport facilities,	An additional indoor facility within the County	dlr CoCo	dlr Parks	2026- 2027
	2.2.2 Investigate possibility of developing existing pockets of land/building extensions currently not in use, for innovative multi-sport facilities and additional public open space	Production of working report into and plan of action for existing space available for use in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown	dlr Parks	dlr Community, dlr Sports	2026-2027
	2.2.3 Tailor school/club partnership model successfully implemented for pitches as a case study to include greater use of indoor facilities	Have 3 new partnerships with schools in place by end 2026	dlr Parks	dlr Community, dlr Sports	2026 - 2027
	2.2.4 Increase multi-sport marking on existing and new indoor and outdoor courts/pitches	Courts/pitches with multi-sport markings to increase by end 2029	dlr Parks	dlr Sports	Ongoing
	2.2.5 Increase offering of combat sports in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, including the provision of at least one new facility specific for multi club use.	Provision of an indoor facility for combat sports	dlr CoCo	dlr Parks	2027-2028

Objectives - Places

Goals	Objectives	Measurement	Lead	Responsibility/ Partner	Timeframe
Improve existing facilities in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown	2.3.1 Install information boards with distance markers, park details and scheduled activities information in parks throughout dlr	Implement research study amongst citizens of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown to assess levels of agreement with stated objectives (before and after implementation of plan)	Active Cities	dlr Parks/LSP	2025-2026
	2.3.2 Improve provision of seating, changing rooms and toilet facilities at existing outdoor and indoor facilities		dlr Parks	Clubs, dlr Sports	Ongoing
	2.3.3 Improve accessibility, active travel, and public transport to parks/sporting facilities in dlr		Active Travel	dlr Parks,	2026-2027
	2.3.4 Increase illumination (where environment allows) in parks in dlr/improve local pathways for cycling, walking and running		dlr Parks	Active Travel	Ongoing
	2.3.5 Continue to develop remediation programme for pitches and facilities in dlr	No. of pitches remediated per year	dlr Parks	dlr Sports	2026-2027
	2.3.6 Utilise technology/data to a greater extent to make utilisation of current resources more efficient	Introduction of Online Booking/ Facilities Management data platform and integration with Sport Ireland “Get Ireland Active” database by end 2025	dlr Parks	dlr Sports	2025
	2.3.7 Develop Pitch Management strategy to manage pitch assets across the County	Investigate and establish a more sustainable & equitable mechanism to fund the ongoing maintenance of pitches	dlr Parks	dlr Parks, Clubs	2026-2027
	2.3.8 Implement maintenance plans	Maintenance plans in place for all facilities by end 2026	dlr Parks	Clubs	2026-2027

Objectives - Places

Goals	Objectives	Measurement	Lead	Responsibility/ Partner	Timeframe
Improve Access to the Mountains	2.4.1 Explore transport options for opening up the Dublin Mountains to those who cannot drive	Establishment of public transport option	dlr Tourism	DMP	2026 - 2027
Ensuring sustainability, biodiversity and inclusion are central to all programmes, initiatives, and policies developed for the purpose of sport and physical activity	2.5.1 Including environmental sustainability as an integral part of any decision on facility upgrades or future developments	To be developed over the duration of this plan	dlr CoCo	dlr Parks	Ongoing
	2.5.2 Implement sustainability campaign in dlr outlining what clubs and individuals can do to promote sustainability, launching pilot programme with clubs to develop 'sustainability toolkit' that can be implemented County wide after the pilot duration	Launch of sustainability pilot programme, including Environmental Sustainability Challenge by mid-2026	dlr Biodiversity	LSP. dlr Sports, Clubs	mid 2026
	2.5.3 Ensure the latest in sustainable pitch provision and maintenance is used when relevant to lessen environmental impact.	To be developed over the duration of this plan	dlr Parks	dlr Leisure	Ongoing
	2.5.4 Facility development to follow the process of AA/SEA Screening (NIS Mitigations if applicable) considering the Natura 2000 sites and the Habitats directive.	Facility development in line with local and national policy	dlr CoCo	dlr Parks	Ongoing
	2.5.5 Work collaboratively with the other Dublin local authorities, NPWS and OPW to develop a strategic plan for the conservation of Brent Geese.	Development of a strategic plan for conservation of Brent Geese and the management of the sites used by these species.	dlr Biodiversity	dlr Parks	2027



iii) Delivery - Bringing The Plan To Life

As is evidenced in national statistics Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown has an active population and is well served by the sport and physical activity facilities and programmes it provides.

There will always be tension between different sporting clubs and bodies who may feel that others are getting a better deal than them, particularly in an environment where participation numbers are rising and the provision of facilities cannot meet this increase in demand.

Where such tension exists there needs to be a clear path of communication, consideration against open and transparent principles, and timely delivery.

Within the Local Authority Executive Function, the management of sport needs to be upgraded through the provision of greater human resource.

To deliver what has been done so far is hard to believe given the workload and the limited resources.

Other areas within the executive from Parks to Tourism and Transport to Housing need to have a clearer line of sight and a better understanding of how sport and physical activity is planned for, delivered and managed.

An office of greater size than currently allocated is an essential if this area of public life is to be maintained let alone improved in line with the recommendations in this plan.

We have recommended processes and structures for planning and ongoing maintenance that will be clear and transparent for all, with priorities and requirements that can be easily understood, and with the human resource needed to make them effective and trusted. Also, in a more rounded approach across different functions where planning, delivery and management are considered as one and not only when one phase has been completed.

As stated previously, the project at St. Thomas gives us a template on how this can be delivered on other capital projects across the County.

On the programmes aspect there are unfilled positions with funding waiting to be drawn down from Sport Ireland.

Providing the right resource internally will allow for the easier delivery and the positioning of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown as a national leader in this field.

Without investment in the right level of staffing, the benefits of their recommendations in this plan cannot be delivered.

Communication

It is not sufficient to be building and delivering great programmes, it must be communicated so that the general population understands what is on, what is available and how to access activities.

Sport has in many ways lagged behind the arts in this area, preferring instead to rely on the fact that those who know will know.

We have already seen the significant benefit in the understanding and reach of the work of the Local Sports Partnership through the appointment of a Sports Marketing and Information Officer and this needs to extend across the wider Sports Unit as well.

That's fine within a club environment but this plan is about reaching wider and engaging with more groups.

They are harder to reach, meaning that a well-crafted and executed social media campaign will fall short among many of the groups we are looking to engage.

A budget is required to use existing channels such as digital billboards, streetlamps, bins and bus shelters, all in the visible public realm to advertise events, activities and programmes on a planned and continually refreshing basis.

In order to get full recognition for the important role the local authority holds, it should also be a requirement, enforced, that dlr branding is appropriately positioned within sporting facilities and club environments.



Image source: <https://dlrsportspartnership.ie/images/>

Objectives - Delivery

Goals	Objectives	Measurement	Lead	Responsibility/ Partner	Timeframe
Increase resources available to the Council and its partners to deliver on sports and physical activity policies	3.1.1 Creation of Sports Facility Officer positions to act as key points of contact for LSP, clubs, and Council, and responsibility for management of sports facilities. Additional new position for Management, Monitoring and Contact on Sport and Physical Activity Plan.	4 additional full-time Sports Facility Officers hired by end 2025. One Outdoor, One Indoor, One National Water Sports Campus. One additional Strategy Implementation Officer in 2025	dlr CoCo	dlr Parks, dlr Harbour	2026-2027
	3.1.2 Fulfilment of currently vacant positions in the Local Sports Partnership	All current vacant positions for which there is funding to be filled within 6 months of securing funding	HR	Dept of Community, Cultural Services and Parks	2025
	3.1.3 Improve relationship management between Council and clubs with new Sports Facility officer as initial Council contact	System in place to nominate point contacts for clubs through whom all requests need to be channelled	dlr Parks	dlr CoCo	2026- 2027
	3.1.4 Clarify and establish set procedures for sports capital funding	Annual window to be agreed upon during which clubs can present potential grant applications to dlr Council for feasibility studies prior to announcement of Capital Grants for that year by start 2025	dlr Parks	dlr Sports	2025
	3.1.5 Investigate possibility of bringing in private sector and large employer sponsorship of public amenities	Pilot programme to be initiated in discussion with proactive NGB	dlr CoCo	dlr CoCo	2026- 2027

Objectives - Delivery

Goals	Objectives	Measurement	Lead	Responsibility/ Partner	Timeframe
Increase awareness levels of programmes and opportunities across Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown	3.2.1 Allocated resource to take advantage of existing media channels available to the Council, e.g. billboards, streetlamps, bins, bus shelters, online & social media channels etc.	To be achieved in 2025	LSP	dlr Sports, dlr Comms	Ongoing
	3.2.2 Specific communications strategy for hard to reach groups, e.g. older adults, Traveller community, ethnic minorities, to be developed	To be achieved in 2025	LSP	dlr Sports, dlr Comms	2025
	3.2.3 Develop rolling quarterly document/publication of programme activities	To be achieved in 2025	LSP	dlr Sports, dlr Comms	2025
	3.2.4 Ensure appropriate Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown branding within sporting facilities and club environments	All dlr funded facilities to have branding by end of 2025.	dlr Parks	dlr Community, dlr Parks	2025
Ensure proper governance and delivery of strategic plan over the next 5 years	3.3.1 Strengthen governance and management structures around the delivery of sport and physical activity in the County	Meet all compliance and reporting requirements of funding agencies	dlr CoCo/ LSP Board	LSP, dlr Sports	Ongoing
	3.3.2 Develop a plan for monitoring and evaluating this strategy throughout its lifetime	Annual monitoring and evaluation process and plan to be put in place	Dept of Community, Cultural Services and Parks	dlr Sports, dlr Parks, LSP	2025



iv) Blue Sky - Looking To The Future

This is a five-year plan with areas identified and timetabled for general improvement in the way sport and physical activity is delivered.

Looking to the future though, listed here are a number of ideas which are worth consideration over time.

The School Sport Bus

In Iceland, the Government provides a bus service for all school children bringing them to sports facilities in their neighbourhood where paid and fully safeguarded coaches and personnel give them the opportunity to be physically active in an after-school environment.

The sports facilities are generally unused between the end of school at say 2-4pm and 6pm when parents or guardians can come collect at a time more suited to a working environment.

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown could pitch to run a pilot programme similar to this which would potentially improve a number of important areas of community life.

As discussed at the start of the document, the County has one of the highest participation rates in the Country. Being one of the most populated areas outside of Dublin City Centre and having land values that limits the construction of facilities, there are challenges in the development of new facilities.

The Council will investigate and create a report regarding the potential use of existing land outside of public parks for the construction of a sports hub.

The use of already-existing brown field sites and the potential acquisition of farmland where funds permit, are two examples of this. This will need to take into consideration a balance between economic realities, environmental factors, and community need.

Objectives - Blue Sky

Goals	Objectives	Measurement	Lead	Responsibility/ Partner	Timeframe
Long-term positioning of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown as the leading County for participation in Sport and Physical Activity in Ireland	4.1.1 Develop a Council platform of best practice to include hard to reach groups	To be decided if/when objective is implemented	LSP	dlr Sports, dlr Parks, dlr Community	2028/ 2029
	4.1.2 Investigate possibility of School Sports Bus - Develop a policy of free transport from schools to designated activity areas - partnering with institutions (e.g. UCD) to provide volunteers and coaches	To be decided if/when objective is implemented	dlr CoCo	Dept. of Education, Schools	2028/ 2029
	4.1.3 Development of a report for the possibility of identifying a location for a Sports Hub in the county.	The development of a working document with the availability of possible land, to include identification of appropriate brown field sites.	Property Management	dlr Parks	2027/ 2029
	4.1.4 Investigate possibility of expanding Dublin Bikes (bike rental programme) into Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown including co-operation with other Dublin Councils	To be decided if/when objective is implemented	Active Travel	dlr CoCo	2028/ 2029
	4.1.5 Develop relationships and a pilot programme which opens school playing fields, halls and courts to provide physical activity programmes during school summer holidays for those who need it most e.g. disadvantaged youth, children with disabilities etc.	To be decided if/when objective is implemented	dlr CoCo	dlr CoCo, Schools	2028/ 2029



SECTION C
SPORT BY SPORT
IN DLR OVERVIEW

The following is a summary of the many forms of sporting activity that take place within the County and illustrates how each sport may link into the delivery of participation in DLR.

 Archery	 Athletics	 Badminton	 Basketball	 Bowls	 Boxing	 Camogie
 Canoeing	 Climbing	 Community Games	 Cricket	 Cycling	 Darts	 Equestrian
 Fencing	 Football	 Gaelic Games	 Golf	 Gymnastics	 GAA Handball	 Hiking
SPORT BY SPORT IN DLR OVERVIEW				 Hillwalking	 Hockey	 Judo
				 Kayaking	 Kickboxing	 Life Saving
				 Martial Arts	 Motorsport	 Olympic Handball
				 Orienteering	 Padel	 Parkrun
 Pétanque	 Pickleball	 Pitch and Putt	 Rock Climbing	 Rowing	 Rugby	 Sailing
 Scuba Diving	 Skiing	 Snooker	 Special Olympics	 Squash	 Sea Swimming	 Swimming
 Table Tennis	 Taekwondo	 Tennis	 Triathlon	 Ultimate Frisbee	 Volleyball	 Walking
 Water Polo						



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 Estate in 2016. Equipment is largely transportable to set up in different locations.

There is a large bank of archery equipment located in dlr Leisure Loughlinstown, 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 and has benefitted in recent years from the development of the Saint Thomas facility in partnership with Dundrum South Dublin Athletics Club, the new track at UCD, and the renovation of the 400-metre track in Kilbogget Park.

Five years ago, only the latter was available as a track facility.

Parkrun facilities are described elsewhere and the dlr Sports Partnership has had success in developing community running groups which can then go on to be self-sustaining.

Running is continuously in the top three physical activities in Ireland and is possible without the need for club membership or specific facilities.

Individuals can make use of the County's roads and pavements, with due care and courtesy for other runners and can make good use of the County Parks.

That said, there is scope to develop more than the existing seven clubs that are located within the County and provide more structure for those wishing to specialise in other athletics disciplines.

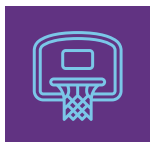


Badminton

Badminton is one of the world's most popular participation sports and of particular appeal in terms of providing sport that is open and popular among ethnic groups.

The imminent development of a Velodrome and Badminton Centre at the National Sports Campus will provide high level facilities across the greater Dublin area.

Storage facilities should be made available for shared use by the four existing Badminton clubs within the area and this is a sport that has potential to grow in popularity.



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 plans have been submitted for an extensive renovation and expansion of these facilities. In addition, there are existing good quality facilities at UCD and in a number of local schools.

Informal basketball is a major element of public amenity sports facilities across Europe and the roll out of the “Box Up” sports equipment access points across the County should allow for a greater provision in public parks of single basketball hoops to allow for games of 3X3 and informal activity.



Bowls

There are a number of private facilities across the County in Shankill, Dún Laoghaire, Blackrock and other locations.

This is a sport that is low impact and with the perception of being very suitable for older participants.

The growth of Pétanque as outlined elsewhere shows there is demand for this kind of sporting activity and it is recommended that the Council be open to funding renovation and upkeep in facilities in return for greater open access for specific programmes.



Boxing

There is a strong local tradition of boxing clubs within communities, and it remains a sport that is both popular at national level in terms of funding and as a way of reaching a different demographic audience to that of the major field sports.

dlr is developing a new combat facility in Monkstown which will accommodate a number of boxing rings, due to be completed by the first quarter 2025

Plans are also in place for a smaller existing boxing facility in Nutgrove, with plans to develop an empty depot behind the current facility.

A challenge is the claim that boxing is considered a hyper local community activity and that the sharing of facilities would be difficult to get over the line, but that runs counter to the collaborative approach which will deliver for other sports and which needs to be maintained in order to provide the improvement in sporting facilities which it can deliver.



Camogie

Camogie clubs tend to operate alongside and use the same facilities as other Gaelic Games clubs.

A number of the larger clubs across the County have adopted the one club model which effectively delivers Gaelic Games as an integrated sporting option, even ahead of the full integration currently being planned at national level.

This collaborative approach fits well with the model of cooperation which is central to this plan.



Canoeing / Kayaking

There are a number of sea-based kayaking clubs as well as individual users of the County's most obvious natural facility, the shore.

Access to the water has arisen through direct and online consultation as a major issue and we have sought to address this in relation to the development of the National Water Sports Campus and the general upgrading of facilities around the harbour and at points along the coast including Killiney Beach.

Providing limited access parking facilities near the access to the water is also considered vital by users and could be accommodated through clubs applying for badge parking to access a number of limited use spaces in the right locations.



Community Games

Community Games groups representing local community areas based on parish boundaries make use of existing parks and public facilities.

This use has developed over time and there is little evidence that a change in the practice is required.



Cricket

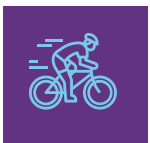
Cricket is likely to see continued growth in popularity and is a sport that is of particular appeal to ethnic groups within the County.

Fingal is well served with individual cricket clubs each with their own facility and a national cricket ground and training facility has been approved for construction at the National Sports Campus in Blanchardstown.

There is a gap though in the provision of facilities in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown. A former pitch in Cabinteely is no longer in use and the facility in Shanganagh Park, along with the crease in Marlay Park are the only public facilities in the County.

The footprint of a cricket pitch and the care that needs to be taken of the wicket presents unique challenges in terms of shared facilities. While Railway Union does operate a shared space model in Sandymount, this is rare, and it may be that the model of developing facilities on a school ground such as Saint Andrews College in Booterstown might be better suited than trying to develop a pitch on public land.

This would allow for more of a sole use basis and enable a higher level of ground care and maintenance that is required on a cricket pitch.



Cycling

Individual cycling has been to the fore in transport planning within the County in recent years and the same is apparent through the development of pump tracks at different locations.

Cycling clubs have engaged in discussion around use of storage and facilities as part of the Saint Thomas facility and this can be extended to space being provided in other large shared indoor sports facility locations.

The development of a national indoor velodrome at the Sport Ireland Campus means that there is no obvious need for a similar facility in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown. We are aware of early-stage discussions between Cycling Ireland and Leopardstown Racecourse around greater access to and use of the tracks that circumnavigate the racecourse.

In consultation, the facility at Corkagh Park in South County Dublin was held up as a model and it may be that a version of that could be possible as part of those discussions around a campus style development at Leopardstown. This could include the provision of a BMX bike facility to replace a former one in Marlay Park. The Council has a detailed cycling strategy ("Smarter Travel, Better Living 2010") with a range of actions and policies that should be part of a strong level of engagement between a stronger Sports Facilities Unit recommended in this plan and the Cycling team in Transport.



Darts

The growth in popularity of Darts is one to keep an eye on. The development of a greater number of indoor sports facilities could include the provision of space towards a Darts Academy similar to those which exist in England on a self-sustaining basis, but which are not yet given a permanent space in Ireland.



Equestrian

There are several privately run equestrian centres across the County. Including them as 'clubs' and encouraging participation in LSP programmes of information and education can help them feel more connected to the sports umbrella. Promoting their activities can also enhance their reach across our urban population.



Fencing

Indoor space is required for participation and for storage and this is a sport that will benefit from the increased emphasis on innovative use of indoor sports facilities.



Football

Football, 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.

The new online booking system, in unison with the "Get Ireland Active" database will provide more up to date knowledge of usage than ever before.

The large number of individual clubs presents a challenge that will only be overcome by a greater willingness to share facilities.

It is recognised that the growth of girls and women's football presents a challenge in terms of additional need for space but also an opportunity to grow a more gender balanced approach to sport. Clubs that avail of Council lands should be obliged to provide equal access to boys and girls, men's and women's teams, whether this is under their own club banner or by a partnership with other clubs.

The FAI has a detailed proposal for the development of facilities at every level of the game, requiring national investment as well as the establishment of an FAI Facility Fund. The Council Executive should maintain a close watch on the development of this idea and be willing to assist in the development of existing lands for improvement where required.

The pressure on facilities at key pinch points is also an issue and one of the proposals is that there should be a greater collaborative approach over the four local authority regions in the Dublin area to liaise with fixture scheduling across the three major field sports.

The development of all weather facilities, in partnership with schools in order to benefit from greater dual use and security, continues to be an important element of the strategy for developing facilities.



Gaelic Games

Gaelic Games, together with Football 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.

The new online booking system, in unison with the “Get Ireland Active” database will provide more up to date knowledge of usage than ever before.

There is limited provision for the development of new pitches but new technologies in pitch provision will allow for greater usage of existing facilities.

The growth of Ladies Football in particular is relevant here because of additional demands that are coming through from existing clubs struggling to meet demand. This should be seen though as an opportunity to grow a more gender balanced approach to sport.

Clubs that avail of Council lands should be obliged to provide equal access to boys and girls, men’s and women’s teams, whether this is under their own club banner or by a partnership with other clubs. Many of the arrangements in place between the Council and clubs are with clubs that are registered under the GAA as opposed to the LGFA or Camogie Association.

Integration of the three associations is moving closer but in advance of that becoming more formalised we should still adopt the policy of providing land and support to clubs where equality is in place. This is referenced in greater detail under the Women’s Sport section of the “Inclusion” pillar of this plan.

As with football, the pressure on facilities at key pinch points is also an issue and one of the proposals is that there should be a greater collaborative approach over the four local authority regions in the Dublin area to liaise with fixture scheduling across the three major field sports.

The development of all weather facilities, in partnership with schools in order to benefit from greater dual use and security, continues to be an important element of the strategy for developing facilities.



Golf

Working together with the “Padraig Harrington Charitable Foundation” on providing a golf putting centre in Marlay Park has been an unqualified success. It has opened up the sport which is both gender neutral and age friendly to a greater proportion of the general public.

The Council operates a public course facility at Stepside, and this should be maintained as an important element of the Council’s general provision of sport. Opening up Shankill Tennis Club to Blind Tennis has seen regional and national tournaments hosted there and a similar approach to Blind Golf at Stepside might also be considered.



Gymnastics

Gymnastics can be one of the sports to benefit most from the increased emphasis on the provision of large indoor sporting facilities.

The model of Gymnastics Ireland being an anchor tenant at the Sport Ireland Campus National Indoor Arena should be studied and rolled out as an option for clubs in the area that are currently paying commercial rates for facilities in industrial units.

The sport is growing at a rapid rate, and this is likely to continue with the advances in elite performance by Irish athletes on the world stage.



GAA Handball

The GAA has developed a new National Handball Centre adjacent to Croke Park but outside of multi-use courts at UCD, there is no easy access to the facilities in the County.

This has been identified as an important sport for the Traveller Community and is discussed in greater detail in the “Inclusion” section of this plan.



Hiking & Hillwalking

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.

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown is proud of its identity being between the mountains and the sea and this should be considered as an important and very local area in which advances might be made.



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.

A challenge though is the argument that the nature of the pitch surface requires sole use by hockey which will not adhere to the policy on a collaborative multi-sport approach.

With finite space and funding, as well as existing private pitch provision, this means that hockey may not be considered a priority in the scoring of potential investment in facilities.

Further investigation is required on the quality of pitch needed which might accommodate hockey alongside other major field sports.



Judo

dlr is developing a new combat facility in Monkstown which will accommodate a number of boxing rings, due to be completed by the end of 2024. Development of this new combat facility may result in space becoming available in the Mounttown Community Facility which other clubs may be able to utilise.



Kickboxing

dlr is developing a new combat facility in Monkstown which will accommodate a number of boxing rings, due to be completed by the end of 2024. Development of this new combat facility may result in space becoming available in the Mounttown Community Facility which other clubs may be able to utilise.



Life Saving

The continued popularity of pool and sea swimming requires a greater emphasis on the importance of Life Saving.

The existing use of dlr Leisure Pools needs to be maintained and even potentially expanded.



Martial Arts

dlr is developing a new combat facility in Monkstown which will accommodate a number of boxing rings, due to be completed by the first quarter 2025

Development of this new combat facility may result in space becoming available in the Mounttown Community Facility which other clubs may be able to utilise.



Motorsport

Reference was made in consultation to the previous of the possibility of staging of a street circuit motor racing event in Dún Laoghaire.

This is unlikely, such an event would not be considered viable in the short to medium term, so in the absence of any plans this is not considered a priority.



Olympic Handball

Olympic Handball is another one of the sports to benefit most from the increased emphasis on innovative use of indoor sports facilities. It has a particular appeal to new Irish communities as well.



Orienteering

Similar to Hillwalking, Orienteering makes good use of natural infrastructure. It can be seen as a positive way of opening up the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown parks to organised physical activity that is sustainable and operated by a National Governing Body for the sport. 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. Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown is proud of its identity being between the mountains and the sea and this should be considered as an important and very local area in which advances might be made.



Padel

A growth sport that has expanded quickly in Northern Europe and attracted significant investment in private facilities. Worth consideration of construction of a public access court if redeveloping existing tennis facilities.



Parkrun

A popular movement which makes excellent use of public parks, generally early on a Saturday morning, and which is self-sustained through the work of volunteers. The provision of storage space for marshalling equipment might be considered as a gesture of support for an activity that delivers much for a small outlay on the part of the Council.



Pétanque

The growth of Pétanque shows there is demand for this type of sporting activity and it is recommended that the Council be open to funding renovation and upkeep in facilities in return for greater open access for specific programmes.



Pickleball

Another growth sport making inroads across age and gender. Generally possible as a “pop up” sport using school and indoor hall facilities.



Pitch and Putt

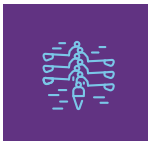
There are a number of Pitch and Putt courses around the County appealing to a diverse age profile. They operate as private clubs for the most part, with limited investment required. There is potential to stage an annual event across the different courses which would generate goodwill for the Council.



Rock Climbing

Private facilities for indoor use are available in Sandyford and could also be considered as part of the business case surrounding Large Indoor Facilities.

Dalkey Quarry is a popular local venue with over 300 climbing routes, the use of which is facilitated by the Council.



Rowing

Rowing can also be a beneficiary of the development of the National Water Sport Campus and associated improvements in terms of access to the water and facilities for changing rooms and equipment storage.



Rugby

Rugby together with Football and Gaelic Games 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.

As with the other two, the new online booking system, in unison with the “Get Ireland Active” database will give a more up to date knowledge of usage than ever before.

There is limited provision for the development of new pitches but new technologies in pitch provision will allow for greater usage on existing facilities. The growth of Leinster Rugby as a professional sport delivers support for individual clubs, as well as coaches and development officers to work with the Council.

The growth of the Women's game has been slower than the other two major field sports but should still be encouraged to the same extent, through the requirement for all clubs in receipt of Council sport and using Council facilities to provide equal access to boys and girls, men's and women's teams, whether this is under their own club banner or by a partnership with other clubs.



Sailing

Sailing is a high profile and very visible sport within Dún Laoghaire. The main facilities are within private ownership, but the development of a National Water Sport Campus is proposed for the harbour and this will be central to the identity of sport in the area and as a major element of tourism.

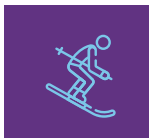
This is the most likely way in which the County will deliver a 'stadium' environment which will be suitable not only for the development of the sport, but also for the potential staging of more national and international events.

The National Water Sport Campus is discussed in greater detail as part of the "Place" element of the Plan. Providing limited access parking facilities near the access to the water is considered vital by users and could be accommodated through clubs applying for badge parking to access a number of limited use spaces in the right locations.



Scuba Diving

Clubs operate out of existing facilities in Bullock Harbour and Scotsman's Bay, the latter of which was renovated and reopened by the Council in recent years.



Skiing

The private outdoor facility at Kiltarnan is sufficient for a sport that has limited reach in Ireland.

Council support for the enthusiastic few who do run the club is deemed a small but worthwhile engagement.



Snooker

There is no real need to provide additional facilities other than those in private ownership.



Special Olympics

The Special Olympics Movement is immensely valuable to the community and while its multi-sport model means that the facilities aspect can be accommodated under the different sporting references in this plan, the opportunity to provide a regional base as part of space within one of the Large Indoor Facilities has much to commend it.



Squash

Squash has been included on the Olympic Programme for Los Angeles in 2028 and as such is expected to grow in popularity.

There are a limited number of courts available in UCD and in private clubs, but the space required means that they are challenging to incorporate in the Large Indoor Facilities.



Sea Swimming

The Forty Foot, Scotsman's Bay, Vico, White Rock, and Seapoint mean that Sea Swimming is a very popular and very visible sporting activity that is open to all once safely used

They are also a primary tourism attraction in the County.

The facilities available to bathers are limited and have not been updated in recent years. The irony being that any programme to upgrade them, with the necessary temporary closure of the facility would be very unpopular.

With a strong emphasis on the sea and the development of the National Water Sport Campus, this should though be given strong consideration in consultation with Swim Ireland.



Swimming & Water Polo

Existing dlr Leisure Facilities together with private pools at UCD and Newpark School, and smaller pools in hotel and leisure clubs are well used.

The importance of swimming as a public safety initiative means that there is a continual upward pressure on existing facilities.

The recent energy and cost of living crisis has placed a spotlight on how expensive facilities are to operate.

While these twin pressures remain in place, the provision of a subsidy to individual groups where pool access is seen as too expensive, is an area that could be considered.



Table Tennis

Table Tennis is another of the sports to benefit most from the increased emphasis on innovative use of indoor sports facilities. Secure storage of tables and equipment is important.

Its global appeal and numbers playing makes it of particular appeal to different communities and across different age profiles.

The potential provision of outdoor tables in proximity to "Box Up" units could also be a way of increasing the provision of accessible and easy to play sport.



Taekwondo

dlr is developing a new combat facility in Monkstown which will accommodate a number of boxing rings, due to be completed by first quarter 2025

Development of this new combat facility may result in space becoming available in the Mounttown Community Facility which other clubs may be able to utilise.



Tennis

Council investment in Shankill Tennis Club has been a real success story over recent years.

Providing a blend of existing private members use, with greater access to the general public has been enhanced by the adoption of Blind Tennis and a greater reach out to people with a disability.

Tennis Ireland could be one of the National Sporting Bodies approached to run pilot programmes in the County, so that greater public use can be gained from private facilities that have benefitted in recent years from substantial funding under the Sports Capital Grant Scheme.



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 popular one in the Dublin area.

Shared storage and bike maintenance facilities should be part of the discussion around the development of the Large Indoor Facilities, giving a sense of place to sporting clubs.



Ultimate Frisbee

A youth-focused 'pop-up' sport that requires no specific facility and can be played on public space.

The potential for a Council supported national event as part of the "Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Sports Festival" would be newsworthy and highlight its credentials as a local authority focused on fresh sporting ideas.



Volleyball

Volleyball is another of the sports to benefit most from the increased emphasis on innovative use of indoor sports facilities.

Its global appeal and numbers playing makes it of particular appeal to different communities.

The staging of the European Women's U20 European Championships in Dublin in 2024 will also give a lift to its visibility and popularity.



Walking

The most popular form of physical activity is perhaps the one that requires the least additional infrastructure to what exists already.

Walking on our pavements and in our public parks is something that can be encouraged through good maintenance of the public realm and perhaps by the creation and promotion of specific walking loops to include those parks, piers, seafronts and more that can become an additional tourist attraction.





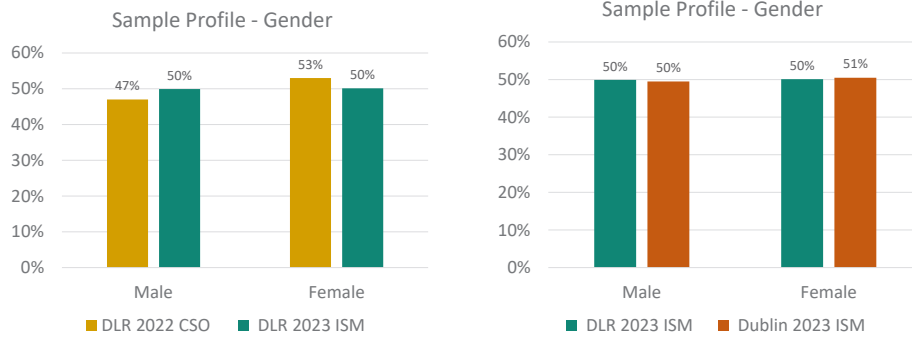
APPENDIX



2023 ISM – DLR Results

- The 2023 Irish Sports Monitor is a large population survey of sports participation and physical activity in Ireland by people aged 16 and over.
- Of the 8,512 respondents surveyed in 2023, 2,552 people reported living in Dublin County and 391 people reported living in Dun Laoghaire Rathdown.
- The percentage point estimates should take into account the sample size for each geographic area and the associated margin of error.
 - ISM Sample, National Sample n=8,512, margin of error at the 50% estimate less than +/- 1.1%
 - ISM Dublin County Sample = 2,512, margin of error at the 50% estimate +/- 2.0%
 - ISM South Dublin Sample n =391, margin of error at the 50% estimate +/- 5.0%
 - Margin of error is greater in subgroup analysis.
 - However, margin of error is smaller at estimates less than or greater than 50%.
- The unweighted gender and age profile of the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown 2023 Census and the 2023 ISM sample is summarised in the next two slides. No weighting was applied to the data for this analysis.

2023 ISM DLR Sample

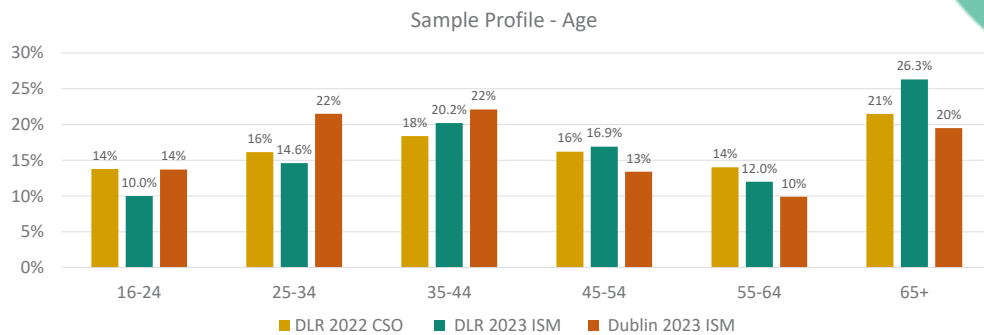


ISM Sample, National n=8,512 (MOE less than +/- 1.1%), Dublin County = 2,552 (MOE less than +/- 2.0%), DLR n =391 (MOE less than +/- 5.0%)



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2023 ISM DLR Sample

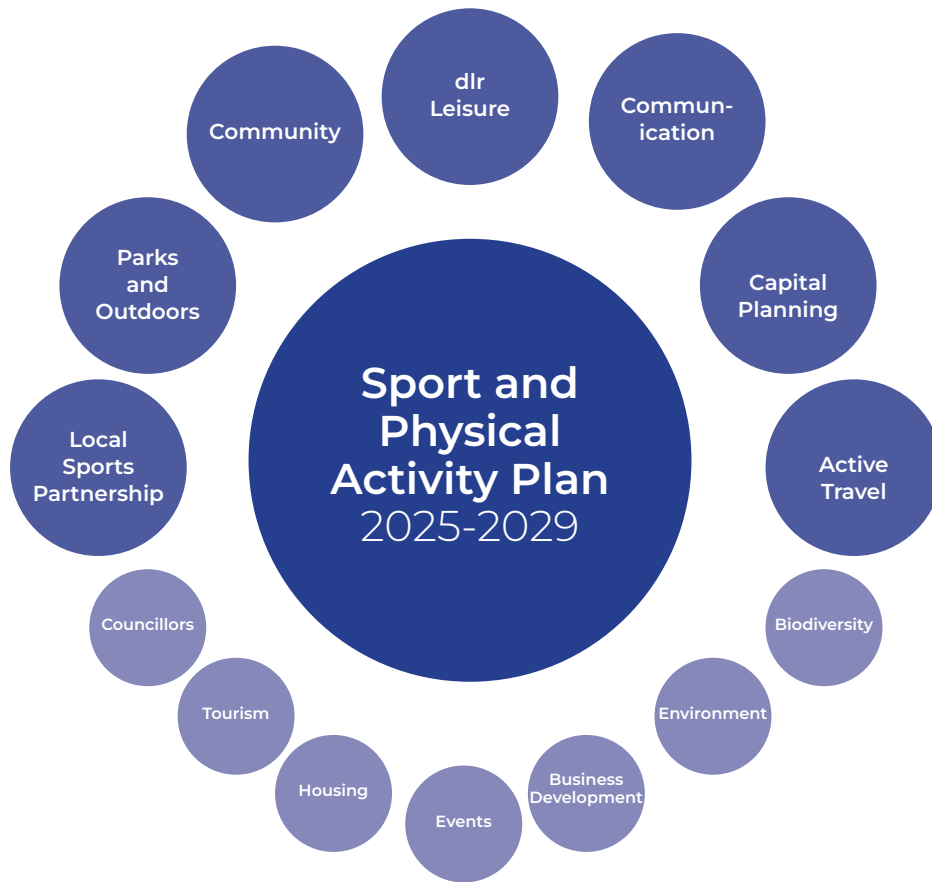


ISM Average Age, National = 46.2, DLR 49.2, Dublin 44.6



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Internal Stakeholder Relationships



External Stakeholder Relationships



Criteria for future development of facilities

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 of sports facilities within dlr. This process will form part of dlr's objective of delivering inclusive, multi-use and sustainable community sport and active recreation infrastructure.

This will be done through the below process.

Clubs must show 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
Facility Usage	As part of the agreement to use facilities clubs must utilise the online booking system to its full potential to include their number of registered members, the number of teams they field and the number of events /fixtures and training slots they use within council facilities. This will give a greater awareness of the pressure on facilities and the programme of maintenance needed, and will then have data on usage patterns and possible gaps to further investigate.
Future	Clubs and groups should have an up-to-date strategic plan based on past and projected future growth within their club.
Needs Analysis assessment	The preparation of a robust assessment will help to understand and influence the facility needs within specific areas of dlr, taking account of other providers; the importance of education, private and voluntary sector provision and a collaborative approach, understanding the supply and demand issues within those areas.
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.
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.
Land Ownership	Preference will be given to submissions for development that are on public land over those which are in private ownership.

Terms of Reference for Pitch Strategy

During the consultation process for the “Local Sport & Physical Activity Plan”, it was made clear that a more detailed research piece should be carried out on the pitches within dlr. Historically local clubs’ membership grows, and their requirements change and this adds pressure on the Council to meet these demands through the provision of new pitches - but due to dlr’s position between the mountains and the sea and open space being at a premium, this is no longer a sustainable option.

In order to manage playing pitches and work towards so that there is enough space available to meet both current and anticipated future pitch requirements, the development of a detailed “Playing Pitch Strategy” will offer the necessary evidence to drive the Council’s future plans.

The utilisation of the current online booking system for grass pitches is the first step in understanding the issues at local level. The development and implementation of a specific “Playing Pitch Strategy” will:

- Provide a clear coherent framework on how pitches will be maintained and funded into the future
- Ensure consistent and transparent decision-making regarding pitch allocation
- To take specific local demand issues into consideration and clearly address the needs of all identified sports in the area, addressing concerns about management, quality, and accessibility in relation to the provision of facilities
- Establishing achievable goals that fit the local authority’s budget and procurement policies

