

COUNTY CARLOW SPORTS PARTNERSHIP

SPORTS DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN 2008 - 2010

“Maximising Our Sports Potential”

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Foreword from Fred Hunter, Chairperson, Carlow County Development Board

As chairperson of Carlow County Development Board I very much welcome this strategic plan, which paves the way forward for a coordinated, co-operative and collaborative approach to the development of sport, recreation and physical activity in Carlow.

County Carlow Sports Partnership was initiated in 2001 and received full designation in 2006. It is an inter-agency group which is a subcommittee of the County Development Board and has its origins in the County Development Board Strategy. Members of the Sports Partnership Board of Management are drawn from key areas of expertise within the sporting, statutory, community and voluntary sectors. All statutory bodies, organisations and groups operating in local areas with a responsibility for or interest in sports development are invited to participate in the LSP. The aim of the Sports Partnership is to increase levels of local participation in sport and physical activity. There is a particular remit in terms of specific target groups such as older people, girls and women, people with disabilities, unemployed people and those who live in disadvantaged communities. The Board of Management of the Sports Partnership is charged with improved planning of sport at local level and the board acts as a forum of sport in each area.

A fundamental aspect of the strategy development process was to consult with the local community to identify and address issues arising. Although there is broad consensus that participation in sport is a good thing, it is also widely understood that there are barriers to participation, especially for key groups in our society. The Sports Partnership will be influential in targeting groups that are otherwise excluded. I commend all involved in the preparation of this strategic plan and I look forward to its implementation.

Fred Hunter

John Treacy, Chief Executive, Irish Sports Council.

The Irish Sports Council has produced three strategies. Central to these strategies has been the importance of establishing a sustainable national structure for local sports development to increase and then maintain levels of sports participation.

The Irish Sports Council considers the strategic planning process to be an essential step in the development of Local Sports Partnerships. This step can bring many benefits such as matching the needs of the local communities to the priorities of the partnership. It is then possible to quantify the resources required effectively to achieve these priorities and answer local needs. This ensures that the plan can be a working document, which will show results over its lifetime.

This is the first strategy of the County Carlow Sports Partnership. It aims to ensure that the Carlow Sports Partnership grows in strength and is the key agency in providing opportunities for more people to become involved in sport and physical activity in the next few years and beyond.

This document is the final product of an intensive process of examination, evaluation, consultation and discussion in the future direction of the Partnership. I would like to thank all those who contributed to the strategy process and I wish everybody involved in the County Carlow Sports Partnership all the best for the future.

John Treacy

Message from Pat Bolger, Chairperson, County Carlow Sports Partnership

The Board of Management of Co Carlow Sports Partnership support this action plan to increase participation in sport in the county, addressing access to sport for the entire community, and maximising the use of existing facilities and resources. The plan takes account of current research and widespread local consultation. It is rooted in the needs of the community from young people to older adults and everybody in between.

We hope to achieve our goals by strengthening the capacity of clubs and organisations, lowering the barriers to participation, targeting disadvantaged and marginalised groups and providing education and training. Sporting participation and success have a ripple effect of breeding success in many other areas of life. The power and passion of sporting involvement and achievement can animate the community and impact physical, social and psychological well being.

As chairperson I would also like to take this opportunity to thank members of the Co Carlow Sports Partnership, the staff (Sports Coordinator Martha Jane Duggan, Sports Inclusion Disability Officer Jenna Doyle, Administrator Sandra Corrigan), and consultants Strategic Leisure Ltd. I would also like to thank all those who have contributed in any way to the consultation process and in particular to Carlow County Council and Carlow County Development Board for their ongoing support.

Pat Bolger

Introduction from Martha Jane Duggan, Co Carlow Sports Coordinator.

As Coordinator of Co Carlow Sports Partnership, it gives me great pleasure to present the Sports Development Action Plan 2008 – 2010, which is the first strategic plan for sports development in Co Carlow. Over the past 18 months, Co Carlow Sports Partnership has made significant progress in the development of sport locally, through the roll-out of national and local participation programmes, training and education workshops, funding support and research reports. The Partnership has developed strong links with local agencies, national schools, community groups and sports clubs - all of whom have contributed to the development of this strategy document. Through a variety of consultation workshops, targeted focus groups, questionnaires etc, we have given all the key stakeholders an opportunity to submit their views. We are very grateful to all of the individuals and groups who took the time and effort to participate in our consultation process.

Evidence suggests that participating in sporting activities increases people's sense of integration into their local community in both urban and rural areas. It enables youngsters, in particular, to channel their energy, competitiveness and aggression in a personally and socially beneficial way. In the countryside, many sports such as canoeing and mountaineering, contribute to health and sustainability of the rural economy. Improving sports facilities and hosting sporting events can modernise an area's image and improve local self esteem. Sport also has a positive impact on physical and psychological wellbeing. Of course sports activities would simply not take place if it wasn't for the many hard working volunteers. The value and contribution of volunteers in sport cannot be underestimated, making a massive contribution as coaches, administrators, managers and officials. Co Carlow Sports Partnership is committed to increasing the recognition given to voluntary workers in sport and supporting them through education and training.

I would like to thank my colleagues, Sandra Corrigan, (Sports Partnership Administrator), and Jenna Doyle, (Sports Inclusion Disability Officer), for their assistance, support and hard work in preparing this document. Special thanks go to the Chairperson and Board of Management for their ongoing support and advice. I also wish to acknowledge Strategic Leisure Ltd & Jim Sanderson who facilitated the strategic planning process. I am delighted to be involved in the roll out of this action plan to develop sport in my home county of Carlow.

Martha Jane Duggan

1.0 BACKGROUND TO COUNTY CARLOW SPORTS PARTNERSHIP

1.1 National Background

Under the Irish Sports Council Act of 1999, the Irish Sports Council (ISC) was established as the statutory body, whose mission is to ‘plan, lead and coordinate the sustainable development of sport in Ireland’. The ISC devised the Local Sports Partnership concept as a means to coordinate and promote the development of sport at local level. Commenced in 2001 the initiative has been supported by the Government, social partners, local authorities, VECs, Health Service Executive, educational institutions and various sporting organisations.

There is currently a national network of the 33 sports partnerships. Twenty under the County Development Board and Local Authority structure, including County Carlow Sports Partnership, with 13 operating as companies limited by guarantee. The Board of Directors are constituted of representatives of those agencies regarded as key influences in local sports development. The partnerships employ a Local Sport Coordinator who acts as the Director of the Partnership, reporting to the board.

Sports partnerships are generally established with the same boundaries as a local authority area with the support of the relevant agencies, e.g. VECs, the HSE, and sports bodies.

The Irish Sports Council directs the strategic and policy direction of the partnerships. However they allow the partnerships a large degree of operational independence. This is based on the originating concept that local operators best understand the particular circumstances and needs of each area.

The Irish Sports Council’s three year strategic plan is called ‘Building Sport for Life’. Increasing participation in sport and physical activity is the key strategic objective of the plan and specific targets have been set for the period 2006 to 2008. The Sport Partnerships have been identified by the Council as the key delivery mechanism at local level for reaching those targets and improving the quality of sport for important population groups.

1.2 Local Background

The need for a coordinated approach to sports and physical activity in County Carlow was identified by Carlow County Development Board in its Strategy for the Social, Economic and Cultural Development of County Carlow 2000 – 2012. As a result of this, the County Carlow Local Sports Partnership Working Group was established in September 2001 with the goal of securing formal status as a Local Sports Partnership.

In January 2004 County Carlow was designated a developmental site and a number of areas of work were progressed, including the completion of a Sport & Recreation Needs Analysis for County Carlow, the development of a clubs database and a number of development workshops.

In 2006 the Irish Sports Council was designated full partnership status and signed 'heads of agreement' with Carlow County Council. This status enables County Carlow Sports Partnership to apply annually for core funding to employ staff, run the Sports Partnership Office, carry out research and deliver programmes and initiatives. Following a review of the existing LSP structures in 2005, the Irish Sports Council recommended that all new LSPs should be established as sub-committees of the County Development Boards, with all employees employed by the relevant Local Authority.

The Sports Partnership Coordinator was appointed in late 2006 on a three year contract. The Sports Partnership Administrator was appointed in Feb 2007. CCSP recently expanded to include the appointment of a Sports Inclusion Disability Officer who took up the post in February 2008.

The Board of Management took part in an induction process during 2007 which clarified the roles and responsibilities of the members and facilitated the election of officers. The Board also expanded to include representatives from local sports clubs and community and voluntary groups.

1.3 Aim

The purpose of the LSP is to increase levels of local participation in sport and physical activity and maximize the use of local resources. They have a remit in terms of specific target groups such as older people, girls and women, people with disabilities, unemployed people and those who live in identified disadvantaged communities.

Other expected outcomes include:

- Enhanced planning of sport at local level

Increased levels of local participation, especially amongst specific target groups
Enhanced local coach deployment
Club development
Volunteer training
Local directories of sports bodies and facilities
Clear priorities for local facility provision and improvement, with related quality management initiatives
Better use of existing facilities
School/club/community and possibly school-NGB links
Local sports events

1.4 Functions of the Local Sports Partnerships

The 3 main functions of the Local Sports Partnerships are:

- 1. Information:** establish a consultative forum, initiate research, compile a sports directory & database, and identify needs and resources to form the basis of local planning
- 2. Education:** overall objective to provide quality opportunities for education and training at local level, provide training courses targeting volunteers, provide access to sports specific courses through the National Governing Bodies of Sport
- 3. Implementation:** develop a strategic plan for local sport, appoint a professional administrator and secure related support services, select participation programmes for LSPs modified to suit local needs, increase impact of national programmes delivered locally, market and promote sport

BOARD MEMBERS

Carlow County Council

Bernie O'Brien

Carlow County Development Board

Margaret Moore

County Carlow VEC

Dan McDonnell

Institute of Technology Carlow

Carmel Lynch

CANDO Community Partnership

Tracey Byrne

Community & Voluntary Forum

Mary Meaney

HSE

Olive Fanning

Sports Representatives

Liam O'Brien

Pat Bolger

Aidan Maher

Cecil Whelan

Garry Coady

Tom Geoghegan

Community Representatives

Patricia Hynes – People with a Disability

Edel Kehoe – Older Peoples Network

STRUCTURE OF THE BOARD

Chairperson: Pat Bolger

Vice-chairperson: Liam O'Brien

Finance Sub-Committee: Bernie O'Brien, Dan McDonnell, Patricia Hynes, Mary Meaney.

Marketing Sub-Committee: Olive Fanning, Carmel Lynch, Garry Coady & Tracey Byrne

STAFF OF THE SPORTS PARTNERSHIP

Sports co-ordinator: Martha Jane Duggan

Sports Administrator: Sandra Corrigan

Disability Officer: Jenna Doyle

2.0 KEY INITIATIVES TO DATE

In the short time that County Carlow Sports Partnership has been in existence significant progress has been made in a number of areas to support clubs, provide advice and training to volunteers and promote sport and increase participation through national and local programmes. The following list outlines the key initiatives to date:

Sport & Physical Recreation Needs Analysis for County Carlow

The County Carlow Sports Partnership Working Group completed a Sport and Physical Recreation Needs Analysis for County Carlow in 2005 assisted by McDonagh Consultants. The report provides a comprehensive overview of physical recreation needs of people in County Carlow and in particular it considers current participation and provision from the perspective of low participation groups. This information was used as the basis for the development of the Sports Development Strategic Plan for County Carlow.

Audit of Indoor Community & Sports Facilities.

The Sports Partnership worked in conjunction with Carlow Community & Voluntary Forum to carry out an Audit of Indoor Community & Sports Facilities. This research project identifies opportunities for facilities development and highlights black spots; enabling improved targeting of development efforts in the future; and will identify opportunities to develop linkages for shared facility use between schools, clubs, and communities. A Directory of Indoor Community & Sports Facilities will be produced in September 2008 based on this research.

Sports Partnership Website

The Sports Partnership website www.carlowsports.ie was developed with the assistance of local IT Company T2. People interested in sport and physical activity can log on to book courses online, search for clubs and facilities, find out about programmes and events in their area and get information about club development and funding opportunities.

Local Sports Volunteer Awards

The Local Sports Volunteer Awards event was held on the 25th April 2007 to recognise the contributions and achievements of nine local volunteers in sport including coaches, administrators, officials and

leaders. The nine nominees each received a special commemorative award from Sean Kelly, former President of the GAA, and current CEO of the Irish Institute of Sport.

Sports Festival for Older Adults,

The Sports Festival for Older Adults, a joint initiative between CANDO Community Partnership and County Carlow Sports Partnership, was held on the 6th June 2007 in Carlow Lawn Tennis Club. Each of the thirty participants got to try out a number of different activities, such as, 10 pin bowling, short mat bowls, petanque, line dancing, sit fit etc. This event was the culmination of a series of eight Go for Life Physical Activity Leader workshops for Older People. Six of the participants were involved in organising the event. The participants came from all corners of the county including Borris, Bagenalstown, Leighlinbridge, Hacketstown, Tullow and Rathvilly.

Volunteer & Coach Support

The sports partnership assists coaches and volunteers through education and information. Over 240 people have taken part in sports partnership training and workshops to date. The training and workshops cover a range of topics such as: Code of Ethics for Children's Sport; Children's Officer Training; Funding Workshop; Swim Helper Training; Defibrillator Training, First Aid and Coaching.

Club Development

County Carlow Sports Partnership assumed responsibility for administration of the Youth Sport Grant Scheme previously administered by Carlow VEC in 2007. The VEC are still actively involved in the grant as partners in the LSP. The Sports Partnership also secured €25,000 from the Dormant Accounts Grants Scheme for projects to increase participation of disadvantaged young people in sport in the county. Sports Partnership staff also organise Sports Capital Funding Workshops and provide advice and assistance to individual clubs.

National Participation Programmes

The **Buntús** programme was delivered to 283 teachers in 38 National Schools with each school receiving free sports equipment worth €600,

resource cards and the opportunity to attend a three hour training programme facilitated by Irish Sports Council Tutors. This programme was developed to support teachers and other adults in introducing young people to sport and helping to develop their interests. Buntús Play and Buntús Multi Sport will initially be delivered by teachers in primary schools in support of the Physical Education curriculum. The **Buntús Start** programme, which targets children from 3 – 5yrs, was initiated in partnership with the County Childcare Committee. Every childcare facility in the County will have the opportunity to attend a specific training course to learn how to introduce sports and activities to children 3 – 5yrs. The Sports Partnership also secured €16,000 under the national **Women in Sport** Programme. This programme will target teenage girls and women residing in rural areas.

Local Participation Programmes

County Carlow Sports Partnership developed and implemented a number of Local Participation Projects in 2007 targeting low participation groups, such as, people with a disability, youth at risk and teenage girls. The Sports Coordinator worked with a number of local agencies and voluntary groups to organise and set up participation programmes through funding secured from: HSE; National Disability Strategy; & CANDO Community Partnership e.g.: Duck Down Swim Club – Carlow Down Syndrome Support Group; Special Olympics Basketball Club; Cairdeas Circle of Energy; Playground markings in Ardough NS, Carlow School Completion Activity Programme, and Tullow School Completion Activity Programme.

Sports Inclusion Development Officer

The Sports Coordinator secured funding through the Dormant Accounts Grant Scheme in 2007 to appoint a Sports Inclusion Disability Officer (SIDO) on a two year contract to increase the physical activity levels of people with a disability. Jenna Doyle took up the post on the 18th February 2008. A Local Ability Forum is to be established to support and advise the SIDO. The Ability Forum will operate as a sub-committee of the Sports Partnership Management Committee.

3.0 SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF COUNTY CARLOW

3.1 Introduction

The County is 943 sq.km. in area. The principal towns in the County are Carlow, Tullow, Muinebheag, Hacketstown and Borris.

County Carlow forms part of the South East Region for development purposes, as designated under the European Community Structural Fund for Regional Development. The South East Region consists of counties Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary South Riding, Waterford and Wexford.

Carlow is uniquely positioned constituting a hub that links the Eastern Region, the South Midlands Region and the South Eastern Region. Carlow town enjoys strong linkages and relationships with the towns of Athy, Portlaoise and Kilkenny with a significant number of people from neighbouring Counties accessing services in Carlow town

3.2 Population

The unprecedented growth in the national economy and the increase in national population in recent years have been mirrored in Co. Carlow.

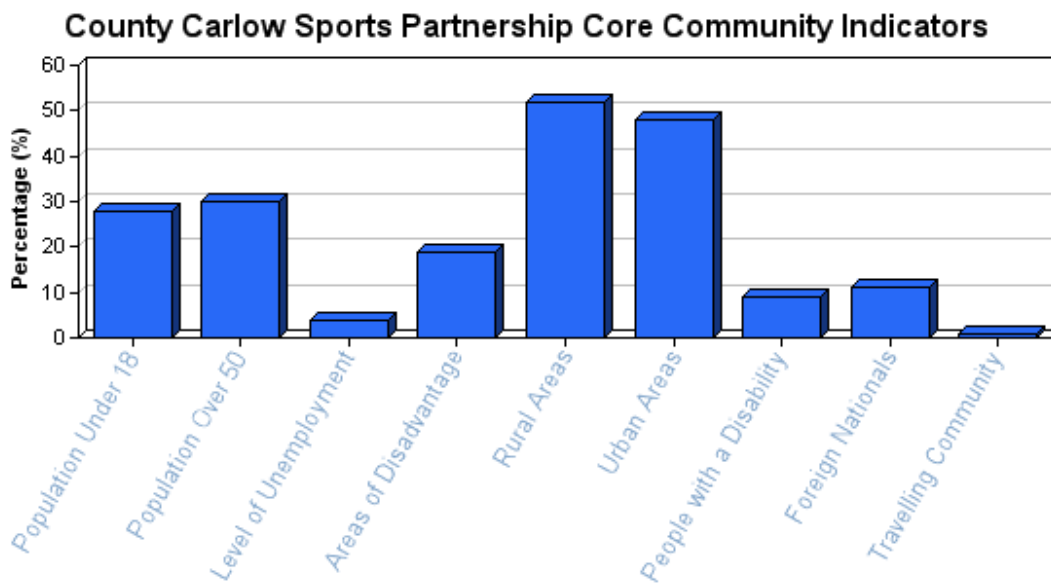
The population of County Carlow according to the 1996 census was 41,616. This was a 1.6% increase on the 1991 figures. However, in the six year period between 1996 and 2002 the population increased by 10.2% to 45,845 persons. In the 2006 Census the population of Carlow is given as 50,349, an increase of 4,335 on the population recorded in the 2002 Census - a 9.4% increase. This corresponds with an overall population increase in Leinster of 9%, and a national population increase of 8.2%. The population is made up of 25,611 males and 24,738 females

The 2006 Census identified 4,739 persons with a disability which is 9.4% of the County population. Of the 50,349 population the age breakdown is as follows:

| 0 – 9yrs | 10 – 19yrs | 20 – 39yrs | 40 – 59yrs | 60+ |
|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| 7,260 | 6,918 | 16,381 | 12,366 | 7,424 |

3.3 Population Distribution

Carlow has traditionally had a strong rural dimension to the County. However, preliminary results from the 2006 Census would suggest that this is changing, with approximately half of the County's population located in rural areas and half within urban areas. The population of Carlow town and its environs is expected to increase from approximately 18,550 to 24,000 by 2011.



3.4 Areas of Disadvantage

The **RAPID** Programme is a Government initiative, which targets 46 of the most disadvantaged areas in the country. The Programme aims to ensure that priority attention is given to the 46 designated areas by focusing state resources available under the National Development Plan. The Programme also requires the Government Departments and State Agencies to bring about better co-ordination and closer integration in the delivery of services. An Area Implementation Team (AIT) was established in each of the 46 areas to develop a plan for their area. The following is a list of the RAPID areas in Carlow.

Tullow Road - Sunset View, Bridge St, New Oak Estate, Cois Aibhainn, Carrig Rua, Mount Leinster Park, Askea Lawns, Silver Pines, John Sweeney Park, Dereen Heights, Cherry Mount Drive, Riverview Close, Burrin Manor, The Laurels, Staplestown Road.

Graiguecullen - Fr. Byrne Park, Rossmore View, Whitney Place, Maher Road, Governey Park, Pearse Road, Croppy Place, Sleaty St, Pacelli Avenue, Ninety Eight St, Church St, Henry St, St. Fiaccs Terrace, Chapel St, Radharc Oisin, Governey Sq, The Numbers, Duggan Avenue.

The **CLÁR** programme (Ceantair Laga Árd-Riachtanais), launched in October 2001, is a targeted investment programme in rural areas. CLÁR complements both the RAPID programme for disadvantaged urban areas and RAPID 11, the programme for provincial towns. They were introduced on foot of commitments in the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness for a targeted investment programme in both urban and rural disadvantaged areas. CLÁR provides funding and co-funding to Government Departments, State Agencies and Local Authorities in accelerating investment in selected priority developments. These investments support physical, economic and social infrastructure across a variety of measures. The measures introduced under the programme reflect the priorities identified by the communities in the selected areas, identified by the Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs at the outset.

Clar Areas in Carlow: Garryhill, Killedmond, Old Leighlin, Rathanna, Ridge, Ballymurphy, Coonogue, Glynn, Kyle, Marley.

South East Regional Drugs Task Force

In an effort to deal with the growing problem of drug abuse among young people in Carlow, the HSE funded the appointment of a Drug Task Force Coordinator. The coordinator implements the South East Regional Drugs Task Force (SERDTF) Strategic Plan 2003-2008.

The Task Force's primary objective is to develop and implement responses to the growing issues of drug misuse. The committee focused on Carlow and Kilkenny is one of four in the South East Region liaising with the SERDTF on identifying projects within the context of the Regional Strategic Plan.

The South East Regional Drug Task Force membership is comprised of statutory, voluntary and community members who all play a vital role in the provision of coherent strategies to address the complex issues of drug misuse.

3.5 Clubs in Carlow

There is a wide range of quality clubs in Carlow from the mainstream - GAA, Soccer and Rugby to the minority - Martial Arts, Rowing and Archery. The Sports Partnership produced a comprehensive directory of clubs in the county which can be accessed on the web @ www.carlowsports.ie or by contacting the Sports Partnership office. There are also a great number of community groups that organise physical activity sessions e.g. Active Retirement Associations, Family Resource Centres, Womens Network etc.

3.6 Facilities in County Carlow

The Carlow Indoor Community and Sports Facility Audit was undertaken in 2007 and completed in October 2007. The report was prepared by ILC, Donegal. The audit covered 159 facilities throughout the County and included community facilities; schools and sports clubs. The study was structured on the basis of electoral areas and the following is a breakdown of facilities by electoral area:

| Electoral Area | Community Facilities | Sports Clubs | Schools | Population per square kilometre | Population per facility |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|----------------|--|--------------------------------|
| Borris | 12 | 5 | 10 | 33 | 630 |
| Carlow Town | 18 | 13 | 17 | 383 | 617 |
| Muinebheag | 12 | 17 | 13 | 47 | 574 |
| Tullow North | 10 | 2 | 5 | 33 | 346 |
| Tullow South | 11 | 12 | 10 | 45 | 400 |
| Totals | 63 | 49 | 55 | | |

The study considered issues including area profile; spread and dispersal of facilities and standard of facility. It also considered operational issues across the county including, programming; development approaches; facility dispersal; general access; vandalism and best practise. A full copy of this report is available from the Sports Partnership office.

3.7 Key Issues arising from the Socio-economic Profile

The challenges arising from the Socio-economic Profile of the county include the following:

- ❖ Carlow has a rapidly expanding population which puts pressure on existing resources
- ❖ More people means more houses and the majority of these are likely to be built as part of housing developments. It is therefore crucial that physical recreation needs (i.e. space/green areas/recreational areas etc) are considered when planning for housing provision in the County
- ❖ Facilities are underutilised. Access to facilities and programming, vandalism, management, and upgrading of facilities are all important issues to be tackled.
- ❖ The majority of the population live in the north of the County which has implications for physical recreation resource provision and the prioritising of demand, and need, for those resources. However this needs to be balanced against a clear need for more opportunities in the South of the County and in rural areas in general.
- ❖ There are barriers to participation for certain target groups, e.g. transport, cost, language, literacy etc. Social inclusion should be high on the agenda to bring about a positive change and to break down the barriers to participation for certain target groups (children, youth, women, older people, disadvantaged areas, & ethnic minorities). Research shows that sport can be a powerful mechanism for change through: empowerment and self development; regeneration of urban and rural areas; encouraging people to stay in the educational system and promoting the integration of non-nationals.
- ❖ Employment, training and education are linked to participation levels. It is essential to establish relationships with educational bodies and employment support agencies to promote sport and recruit and train volunteers.

4.0 SPORT & PHYSICAL RECREATION NEEDS ANALYSIS FOR CO CARLOW 2005

4.1 Introduction

The County Carlow Sports Partnership Working Group completed a Sport and Physical Recreation Needs Analysis for County Carlow in 2005 assisted by McDonagh Consultants. The report provides a comprehensive overview of physical recreation needs of people in County Carlow and in particular it considers current participation and provision from the perspective of certain low participation groups, (children, young people, older adults, women, people with a disability & non nationals). This information, along with additional research, was used as the basis for the development of the Sports Development Strategic Plan for County Carlow 2008 - 2011.

4.2 General Findings

- ❖ Whilst County Carlow has a wide range of opportunities for physical recreation, these are not equally accessible to all members of the community.
- ❖ The planning process within the county needs to take more account of physical recreation needs and in particular there is a need to identify and provide more public space for such activities.
- ❖ There exists a wide range of 'community' facilities (e.g. community owned halls and community centres, church halls and school facilities), which have significant potential as a resource for sport and physical recreation programmes/activities.
- ❖ A declining number of volunteers is resulting in a significant reduction in the ability of clubs and organisations to deliver opportunities.
- ❖ Within existing provision there is too much emphasis on competition rather than simply participation for enjoyment and health.
- ❖ In order to ensure that adequate provision is made for the identified target groups/ low participation groups, a greater awareness needs to be developed amongst providers of sport and physical recreation opportunities (e.g. within clubs and organisations) of the concept of social inclusion.
- ❖ Carlow's expanding population will continue to put pressure on existing resources and there is a danger that these will increasingly be used by what might be termed the young and healthy to the exclusion of the target groups considered in this Analysis.

- ❖ Issues around 'duty of care' on the part of those delivering opportunities will more than likely increase in the future. Support is needed to ensure that people are well equipped to handle new responsibilities and to ensure that potential helpers are not put off by apparent complexities.

The Needs Analysis recommends four **priority areas** for CCSP to address within its strategic delivery of programme. These are:

- ❖ Facilities and Recreational Infrastructure
- ❖ Leadership, Training and Development Programmes
- ❖ Supporting Healthy Lifestyles
- ❖ Co-ordination and Information

In the identification and development of current priority areas and **strategic themes** of work in the creation of the 2008 - 2011 Strategic Plan, these have been extended and now include:

- ❖ Facilities and Recreation Infrastructure
- ❖ Leadership, Training and Development
- ❖ Participation
- ❖ Effective Governance
- ❖ Social Inclusion
- ❖ Marketing and Communication

5.0 SPORTS ACTION PLAN 2008 – 2011

5.1 Introduction

In the compilation of this, our first strategic plan for sports development in the county, Co Carlow Sports Partnership engaged in a process that involved wide-ranging consultation with key stakeholders, consideration of the implications and recommendations from local and national research and extensive discussion amongst board members. The Strategic Plan is not intended to replace the extensive work that is being carried out in sport in Carlow but to complement, support, and add value to it. The successful implementation of this plan will require buy-in from the key stakeholders and interagency partnership working. CCSP was assisted in the development of the plan by Strategic Leisure Ltd, (strategic planning consultants).

5.2 Methodology

The methodology employed in carrying out the Strategic Plan comprised of: desk research; revisiting the Sport & Physical Recreation Needs Analysis 2005; questionnaire surveys; public meetings & focus group meetings with low participation groups.

Following the research and consultation process six strategic themes and priority areas were identified and proposed actions were drafted under each by the Board of Management. A copy of a draft strategy was circulated to the ISC; DAST; and other national and regional agencies together with local community, voluntary and sports groups inviting written submissions.

The plan, which is intended to give a sense of direction to all involved in the development of sport in County Carlow over the 2008 – 2010 period, presents an analysis of our main strengths, a long term vision based on agreed values and priorities and opportunities for development, and a realistic Action Plan with achievable outcomes

5.3 National & Local Research

This strategy has been prepared and will be implemented with consideration of a body of local and national research. These are referenced in Appendix B and outlined on the next page.

5.4 SWOT Analysis

In the preparation of the strategy the Board and staff participated in a series of development workshops including a SWOT Analysis to examine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in relation to the LSP. The following table is a summary of the internal and external strengths and opportunities for development identified:

| Strengths | Opportunities for Development |
|---|--|
| <u>Internal</u> Tradition of interagency work and collaboration in the county Skills, knowledge & experience that the Board Members bring to the process | <u>Internal</u> Raising the profile of the LSP Resources – implementation of the strategy is dependent on three full-time staff. Additional development officers will be required in the long term to maximise success. |

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Pooling of resources from relevant agencies</p> <p>Source of information for all involved in sport and physical activity</p> <p>Forum for key sports providers for collaboration and information sharing</p> <p>Evidence based – actions prioritised in this strategy are the result of consultation within the county and research completed to date e.g. Needs Analysis, Strategic Plan & Facility Audit</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>External</u></p> <p>Clear strong national vision for sports participation by the ISC & rollout of National Network of LSPs</p> <p>Number of facilities available for use</p> <p>Awareness of the need to increase participation & competition in sport</p> <p>Compact nature of the county</p> <p>Current level of voluntary input in the county</p> <p>NGB Development Officers operating in the county</p> <p>Support from ISC and LSP</p> | <p>Use of research and evidence to guide policy and practice</p> <p>Limited levels of financial resources for sports development</p> <p>Targeting low participation groups</p> <p>Addressing the barriers to access and promoting social inclusion</p> <p>SPEAK system for the evaluation & monitoring of initiatives</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>External</u></p> <p>Recruiting, training and retaining new volunteers</p> <p>Facility development, access and usage</p> <p>Absence of role models & lack of motivation to be active</p> <p>General public increasingly time-poor – impacting participation & volunteerism</p> <p>Buy-in from partner agencies and groups</p> <p>Tackle increasingly sedentary lifestyles</p> <p>Limited opportunities for participation in physical activity for certain groups and individuals</p> <p>Maximising the use of natural resources & upgrading of facilities</p> |
|---|---|

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>network</p> <p>Delivery of programmes, e.g. Buntus, Go for Life, Code of Ethics, Women in Sport etc.</p> | |
|---|--|

5.5. Vision, Mission & Values

Vision

The Vision of County Carlow Sports Partnership is:

“Maximising Our Sports Potential”

Mission Statement

Our Mission Statement acknowledges that:

“CCSP will coordinate and support the development of sport in Co Carlow through effective partnerships and quality and varied programmes based on identified need, which will be aimed at increasing opportunities for participation in sport and physical activity by all.

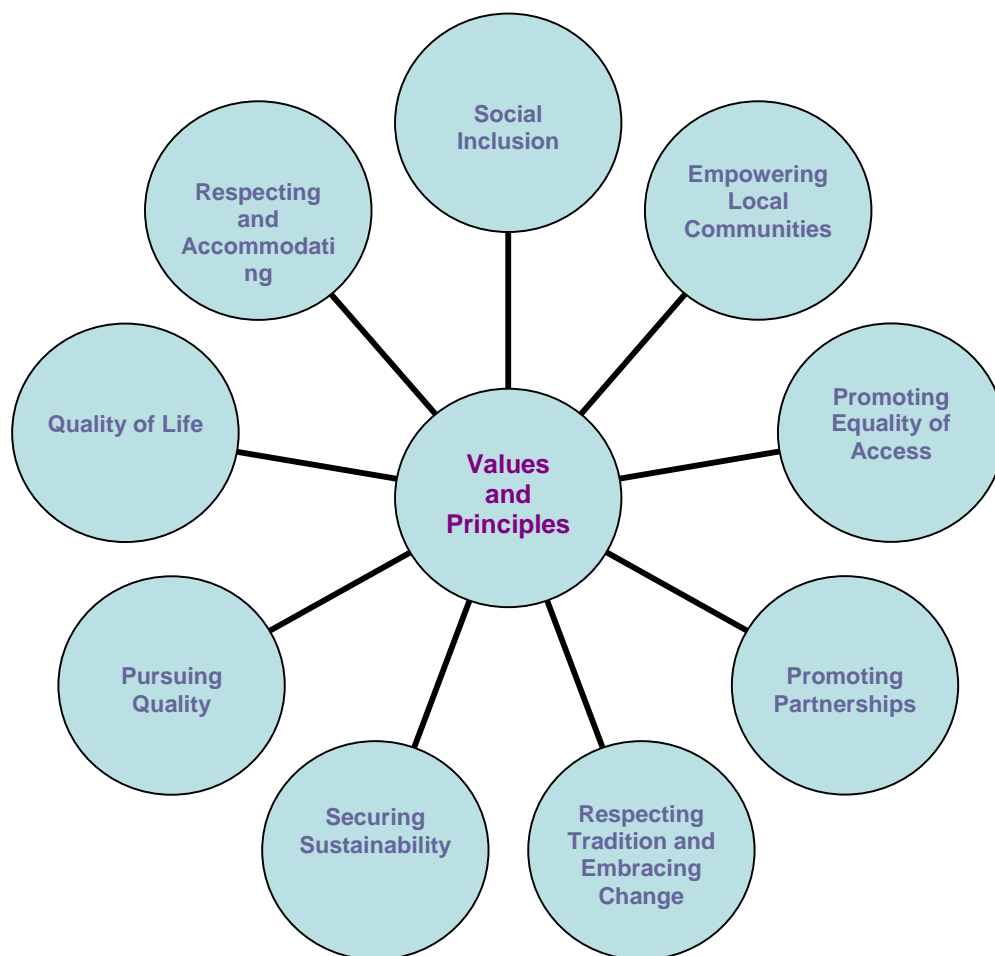
It will maximise and support the development of resources and promote the benefits of sport to all sections of the community.

CCSP will link local sports and governing bodies and departments and it will deliver its services in a professional, equitable and transparent way”.

Values and Principles

CCSP will undertake its future work and be governed by the following values and principles:

- **RESPECTING AND ACCOMMODATING DIVERSITY** – CCSP *will be fully inclusive in all of its programmes and internal governance and will accommodate diversity in all of its activities;*
- **SOCIAL INCLUSION** – CCSP *will actively support partner initiatives and will lead on ensuring that marginalised groups are included in all of its programmes and activities;*
- **EMPOWERING LOCAL COMMUNITIES** – CCSP *will engage with local communities, individuals and others to promote local ownership and responsibility;*
- **PROMOTING EQUALITY OF ACCESS** – CCSP *programmes and activities will be accessible to all and it will encourage its partners to promote equality of opportunity for all;*
- **PROMOTING PARTNERSHIPS** – CCSP *values the strength and potential sustainability of effective partnership working;*
- **RESPECTING TRADITION AND EMBRACING CHANGE** – CCSP *will continue to recognise and respect tradition and is committed to adapt to changing circumstances and environments throughout its strategy and also through its self management;*
- **SECURING SUSTAINABILITY** – CCSP *will encourage the sustainable development of sport within the County;*
- **PURSuing QUALITY** – CCSP *will deliver quality programmes and services to all of its participants and partners and will adopt quality principles in all of its governance and management procedures;*
- **QUALITY OF LIFE** – CCSP *will, throughout the term of its strategy commit to adding value to the quality of life of residents and visitors to County Carlow, in their participation in sport and physical recreation;*



5.6 Strategic Themes and Priority Areas

Following the research and consultation process six strategic themes and priority areas were identified and proposed actions were drafted under each by the Board of Management.

- ❖ Facilities and Recreation Infrastructure
- ❖ Leadership, Training and Development
- ❖ Participation
- ❖ Effective Governance
- ❖ Social Inclusion
- ❖ Marketing and Communication

Please contact the Co Carlow Sports Partnership office for a detailed breakdown of the strategic themes and priority areas.

6.0 IMPLEMENTATION & EVALUATION

6.1 Implementation

The Co Carlow Sports Partnership Board of Management will oversee the implementation of this Strategy from 2008 - 2010. The Action Plan will be implemented by a wide range of groups and agencies operational in the County and with the support of a number of national and government bodies. While the Strategic Plan proposes a general framework for action over a three year period, an annual Implementation Plan will be developed each year to set out detailed programmes of work.

6.2 CCSP Member Agencies role in the implementation of the Strategic Plan

CCSP board members will ensure that their plans and policies over the next three years are in keeping with the vision and goals of the sports strategy. When drawing up new plans and policies, each agency will match the goals and objectives of this strategy with those emerging in the agency's new plans, by answering the following questions:

- What are the main objectives or themes of our plan?
- Which themes of the CCSP Strategy does each objective of the new plan meet?
- Which of the goals and strategic objectives of the CCSP Strategy does each objective of the new plan contribute to achieving?

The implementation of the Strategy will also be overseen by CCLA; ISC; CDB and through a series of sub-committees elected from within the CCSP with specific responsibility for particular remits such as, Finance and Marketing etc.

6.3 Monitoring & Evaluation

CCSP will make annual returns to ISC on its performance against targets within the strategy. Regular monitoring and evaluation will be carried out on each of the strategic themes to ensure that progress is being made and highlight issues arising. The key performance indicators detailed in the action plan will enable the partnership to measure success. Programme updates and activity monitoring will take place through Board Meeting Reports.

Following on from a recommendation of the Fitzpatrick Report 2005, the Irish Sports Council has implemented a common evaluation system for all Local Sports Partnerships. The SPEAK System is a computer based monitoring and evaluation system which is designed to:

- Produce information to assist staff and management to make informed decisions.
- Allow for ongoing internal review, periodic assessments, and provide a facility for external inputs.
- Assists networking based on sharing of information between projects, counties, regions and themes.

6.4 Financing the Plan

The Irish Sports Council provides annual core funding to assist Local Sports Partnerships under the headings of: staffing, administration, communications, national participation programmes and education and training. LSPs can also apply to the ISC Women in Sport Grant Scheme and for programme funding for local participation programmes.

The Fitzpatrick Report 2005 recommended that after 2008, a minimum of 50% of the core costs of Local Sports Partnerships would be provided by local agencies. It is expected that partner agencies will contribute with financial support or 'benefit-in-kind' in the delivery of the sports action plan.

County Carlow Sports Partnership will continue to pursue external funding opportunities which may arise, (e.g. YPSFF, Dormant Accounts, National Disability Strategy, European Programmes etc.). This may be done through a local interagency approach or in partnership with other LSPs. Funding will also be raised through LSP training and workshop participation fees. Although these events are heavily subsidised to ensure accessibility, it is appropriate to charge a fee for certain events.

APPENDIX A

DEFINITIONS, DESCRIPTIONS & ABBREVIATIONS.

Definitions

The Sports Partnership has adopted the following definitions as outlined in the Council of Europe's European Sports Charter (1992):

- **Exercise** – Purposeful physical activity, which is often structured and pursued for health and fitness benefit.
- **Play** – Play is fun and helps physical, intellectual, linguistic, emotional and social development
- **Physical Activity** – All forms of bodily movement which uses energy.
- **Recreation** – Defined as recreational sport where the emphasis is on health enhancing activities engaged in by individuals and informal groups.
- **Sport** – All forms of physical activity, which through casual or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental-wellbeing, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels.

Descriptions

Buntus Irish Sports Council national programme that provides equipment and training for teachers and leaders in pre-school and primary schools enabling them to increase opportunities for children to participate in physical activity.

Go for Life Age & Opportunity national programme which promotes physical activity for older adults, empowering older people to organise and lead physical activity sessions for their peers. Go for Life is delivered by CANDO Community Partnership in Carlow, supported by CCSP.

Code of Ethics & Good Practice in Children's Sport Training modules for leaders within sports clubs to promote a child-centred environment,

identifying and eliminating practices that impact negatively on a young person's safe and enjoyable participation in sport.

Women in Sport The Irish Sports Council initiated the Women in Sport Programme to increase the physical activity levels of women. Funding is provided by the ISC for locally developed initiatives identified by each LSP.

Sli na Slainte The Sli na Slainte or 'paths to health' routes was developed nationwide by the Irish Heart Foundation (IHF) in association with ISC and LSPs. Along with outdoor walking routes marked by colourful signs at kilometer intervals, the programme has expanded indoors to include motivational signs to encourage people to be more active throughout the day.

Lucozade Sports Education The Sports Education Programme, sponsored by Lucozade Sport, devised by the National Coaching & Training Centre and coordinated by CCSP offers clubs the opportunity to access free education for their athletes, players and coaches in the area of Sports Science.

Abbreviations

ARA Active Retirement Association

CCC County Childcare Committee

CDB County Development Board

CCSP County Carlow Sports Partnership

CRYS Carlow Regional Youth Services

CLAR Disadvantaged Rural Areas – Based on population decline.

DAST Department Arts, Sport & Tourism

DSFA Department Social & Family Affairs

HSE Health Service Executive

ESRI Economic and Social Research Institute

GAA Gaelic Athletic Association

ISC Irish Sports Council

IHF Irish Heart Foundation

IT Information Technology

LSP Local Sports Partnership

PE Physical Education

PWDI People with Disabilities Ireland

PAL Physical Activity Leader

RAPID Revitalising Areas by Planning Investment & Development

SAQ Speed, Agility & Quickness

SPEAK Strategic Planning Evaluation & Knowledge

NCTC National Coaching & Training Centre

NGB National Governing Body of Sport

VEC Vocational Education Committee

YPSFF Young Peoples Services & Facilities Fund

APPENDIX B

REFERENCES - National & Local Research

Sports Participation & Health Amongst Older Adults in Ireland
ESRI and Irish Sports Council (Fahey, Layte & Gannon, 2004)

Social and Economic Value of Sport in Ireland
ESRI and Irish Sports Council (Delaney & Fahey, 2005)

School Children & Sport in Ireland
ESRI and Irish Sports Council (Fahey, Delaney & Gannon, 2005)

Physical Activity and Sport, Participation and Attitudes of Older People
(2007)

Irish Health Behaviour in School-aged Children Study (2007)

National Countryside Recreation Strategy (2006)

Teenspace National Recreation Strategy (2007)

Review of Local Sports Partnership Programme
Department of Arts, Sports and Tourism (Fitzpatrick Associates, 2006)

National Health Promotion Strategy
Health Promotion Unit, (Dept of Health & Children 2000)

Ready, Steady, Play: A National Play Policy (2004 – 2008)
National Childrens Office

Report on the Taskforce on Obesity (2005)

Carlow County Development Board Strategy 2002 - 2012

