

11<sup>th</sup> October 2022

Sent via email to LSP Coordinator: galwayactive@galwaycoco.ie

**RE: Local Sports Plans**

Dear Chair and board/committee members,

I am writing to you as the board/committee of **Galway Sports Partnership** regarding the development of Local Sports Plans and how we envision the network of Local Sports Partnerships supporting the development of these plans.

For context, the following is an extract from the communication sent to all county and city managers of 31 local authorities:

In Summer 2018 the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport published the [National Sports Policy 2018-2027](#). The National Sports Policy provides the policy context in which we will operate over the next 10 years. Sport Ireland strongly endorses the National Sports Policy and, as the statutory agency responsible, will have a lead role in many of the key operational and strategic challenges contained within the Policy.

Under Action 8 of National Sports Policy 2018-2027, Sport Ireland has been given the directive to support Local Authorities in developing their Local Sports Plans. This action states:

***“We will establish, through Sport Ireland, an initiative to support Local Authorities in developing Local Sports Plans consistent with the overall vision and objectives of this National Sports Policy. The Local Plan will review needs and set out actions to increase participation locally. It will be developed and implemented in cooperation with Local Sports Partnerships (LSPs), clubs, communities, and partners within and beyond sport”***

As you will be aware, Local Authorities are positioned as key stakeholders in the context of public spaces for sport and physical activity as well as providing opportunities for participation initiatives under this governmental national policy.

Recognising the pivotal role of the Local Authorities and considering worrying participation trends, each Local Authority is being asked to develop a Local Sports Plan to increase participation locally, in a manner consistent with the vision and objectives set down in the National Sports Policy and taking appropriate account of any existing plans.

In addition to this important part already being played by Local Authorities in facilitating sport and physical activity opportunities, it is recognised that sport and recreation are key issues in the development of County and Local Area Development Plans, that sport, outdoor recreation and physical activity are a very important element in the Local Economic and Community Plans and a core consideration for the Children and Young People’s Services Committees (CYPSCs).

Being cognisant of the above, the Government believe that Local Authorities are uniquely positioned

- to be charged within the National Sports Policy with a formal leadership role in facilitating the drive towards greater participation at a local level throughout the population
- to foster a strong sense of collaboration across traditional boundaries with key roles for clubs, Local Sports Partnerships (LSPs), community groups, leisure centres and all other partners locally

LSPs were established as a mechanism to engage with the ‘hard-to-reach’ groups who face barriers in terms of their participation in sport in every county and the already strong relationship between Local Authorities and LSPs is particularly critical in this plan.

The evidence suggests that, even with their limited resources, the LSPs have been quite successful in creating opportunities in sport for many people who would not otherwise enjoy the benefits of being physically active (in 2021, 362,000 people participated in LSP initiatives). They operate within a strong cross-sectoral partnership ethos and have established relationships with a broad range of community-based stakeholders which can be built on when the necessary resources are in place.

It is the ambition of Local Sports Plans that each Local Authority will bring together the partners on the Local Community Development Committees (LCDC), the LSP and CYPSC, with clubs, schools, leisure facility providers, community groups and other stakeholders locally to develop a locally led, nationally supported approach, which will be a key feature of the participation strategy.

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As you will see, Sport Ireland is proposing that the local sports partnership work closely with the local authority on developing the local sports plan for the area that they cover. It is Sport Ireland’s expectation that the LSP will not be the lead on this project but provide a key collaborative contribution will be required as the scope of the project will be vast and covering many departments within the local authority, not just sport and recreation.

As Sport Ireland works with the local authorities, we expect that a clear and concise picture will form of what will be asked of the LSPs at each local level. There is a draft framework in place currently but it has yet to be finalised until after consultation with the local authorities.

As you are aware, LSPs operate in three situations; housed within local authority as a unit, a limited company wholly owned by local authority and company limited by guarantee. All three exist with strong and collaborative relationships within or with their respective local authorities.

As part of the establishment of a consistent approach to the development of local sports plans, we are diligent in our cognisance of these situations, and we will work closely with the local authorities to best support the development of a plan that impacts the greatest within each area.

South County Dublin Council has started the process of development of local sports plan. We will be working closely with them to understand how best we can incorporate the aspects suitable for a nationwide approach. This project has begun in the summer and is in its early stages of development.

Our current proposed timeline for your information is as follows, noting it is subject to agreement with county and city managers and is subject to change:

- October 2022:
  - Sport Ireland present to all county and city managers
  - Establish steering group of county and city managers to develop templated approach to suit all local authorities (expected 4 or 5 options dependant on size, need and demographics)
- November 2022
  - Steering group meetings to determine what approaches have been taken elsewhere and best to approach development of local sports plans

- Confirmation, through these decisions, of exactly what the expectations of LSPs will be and how best to determine their involvement at each local level
- December 2022 to December 2023
  - Phased rollout of the development using the agreed upon approach, learning and adjusting as it is delivered across the country

As you can see, Sport Ireland is working closely with the local authorities on this project and hopes to better understand the needs of each Council's approach to utilising overarching national vision to deliver local objectives for sport, physical activity, planning, recreation, local sports partnership, national governing bodies for sport, outdoor recreation, active travel, facilities, systems, environments; all of which relate to how people are or can be active in each county.

It is envisioned that a national steering group comprised of representatives from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport, and Media, Local Authority Chief Executives and Sport Ireland will be established to guide a national coordinated approach to delivery of Local Sports Plans.

I look forward to working with every Local Authority to ensure the successful delivery of these critical plans for every community in the country.

Regards,



Louise Burke

Director of Participation