

County Wicklow Sports and Recreation Policy

October 2004

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Appendix 1

Planning and Development Act 2000

Local Government Act 2001

Section 1 – Why a Sports and Recreation Policy

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1.0. Introduction

Sport and recreation are part of the broader cultural infrastructure that helps to define the image of an area. It can play a vital role in the economic, social and cultural life of the county, as was recognised in the public consultation that took place for the development of “Outlook”, the ten-year economic, social and cultural strategy for Co. Wicklow¹. Sport can contribute to the regeneration of communities and build civic pride, along with wider social policies. It can enhance the quality of life of individuals, contributing to their physical and mental health. It can contribute to healthy communities in fostering a sense of belonging and community ties.

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The Sports and Recreation Policy will on adoption inform the County Development Plan and a specific policy in relation to the Sports and Recreation Policy will be included in the County Development Plan 2004.

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1.1. Sport and Recreation

The first steps in playing and learning a sport are often taken around the home environment, in the streets and open spaces. In this case the definition of sport, recreation and play becomes blurred. This highlights the interrelationship between these sectors and the integration of the many policy documents of the council.

Sport has been defined as *“all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships, or obtaining results in competition at all levels”* (Council of Europe).

Recreation has been defined as *“involving learning through organised and unorganised activity in free time encompassing a broad range of activities and interests (both structured and unstructured) which individuals pursue”*.

Under this definition there are many forms of recreation, not all of which are in the scope and remit of this policy or of Wicklow County Council. However many are covered in policy documents such as the County Arts Plan, Wicklow County Library Development Plan,

¹ “Outlook”, Wicklow County Development Board, is available on www.wicklow.ie

the Wicklow County Council Heritage Plan and the County Wicklow Play Policy. Taken together these documents cover a wide variety of recreational and leisure activities and form the policy and strategy basis for the Council. This policy deals specifically with the more physical forms of recreation – those most related to sport.

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1.2. Purpose and Aims of Sports and Recreation Policy

The Sports and Recreation Policy recognises the importance that sport and recreation contributes to the quality of life of individuals, communities and the county as a whole. This will be the overarching policy document that guides Wicklow County Council in the provision and expansion of sport and recreation opportunities for the next ten years and also guide decisions in balancing social considerations with financial ones. The County Council will benefit from taking a strategic approach, which includes the identification of deficiencies, needs and priorities and the inclusion of underpinning principles of social inclusion and sustainable development. It will guide the council in a balanced approach in the face of increasing demands on land use. In addition the policy document will inform the Development Contribution Scheme for community facilities which will allow funding or part funding for the upgrading of existing or provision of new recreation and community facilities in County Wicklow. This policy document will contribute to the fairness and legitimacy required by the Development Contribution Scheme and ensure as far as is possible that appropriate places for sport and recreation are provided which meet the needs of the county.

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Specifically the sports and recreation policy will:

- Enable Wicklow County Council to take a proactive and strategic approach in the provision of facilities and expanding opportunities for sport and recreation, ranging from provision of facilities for informal community activity to more formal activity at county level.
- Provide an agreed and representative sports and recreation policy through public consultation.
- Identify ways in which the Council can work in partnership with the local and broader community to deliver healthy, sustainable and vibrant communities.
- Ensure sport and recreation opportunities are made an integral part of urban and rural development and that such sport and recreation amenities are developed and phased in tandem with

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residential development to create and maintain sustainable and healthy communities.

1.3. Role of Local Authorities in Sport and Recreation

The Planning and Development Act 2000 and the Local Government Act 2001 are the main Acts on statute which define the role and duties of local authorities, including Wicklow County Council, in relation to sport and recreation².

1.4. The Role of Wicklow County Council regarding sport and recreation

Due to historical budgetary and infrastructural priorities Wicklow County Council has been constrained in its investment in human and physical capital in sport and recreation in County Wicklow. To date Wicklow County Council's role in sport and recreation includes:

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- Planning provision for sport and recreation facilities, both open space and built facilities
- The provision, by lease or sale, of grounds to sporting clubs and communities
- Sports grant allocation in the County Council Community Grants scheme
- Sponsorship of Wicklow GAA county teams
- Provision and maintenance of public open spaces
- Provision and maintenance of walkways and public right of ways
- Maintenance of beaches and provision of lifeguards
- Provision and maintenance of picnic areas
- Provision of play facilities and wider child-friendly policies (see related County [Wicklow Play Policy](#).)

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² See Appendix 1

Section 2 – Local Context

2.0. Public Consultation and Local Facility Audit

This policy document has been prepared following a consultation process involving:

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- Public consultation regarding “Outlook”, the Review of the County Development Plan, the County Wicklow Play Policy and Comhairle na nÓg 2002
- Audit of Local Sports Facilities
- Sports Club Assessment Survey
- Consultation with Wicklow Communities Networking, Wicklow Community Platform and Wicklow Uplands Council

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2.1. Sport Audit and Club Assessment

This section presents the summary findings on, firstly, the audit of sports provision in County Wicklow and, secondly, the sports club assessment survey undertaken in County Wicklow. The sports club assessment survey findings specifically includes the identification of problem issues and future needs in County Wicklow.

2.2. Audit of Sports Provision

The information in this section represents an overview of the data collected and main research findings.

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This information was compiled through interviews with local authority employees with a countywide knowledge, existing databases on sporting and community groups and the results of a survey carried out by Wicklow County Council. This allowed for the creation of a preliminary sports and club inventory. It is expected and acknowledged that more organisations and clubs exist but have not yet been identified.³

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The following is a list of the main findings drawn from an analysis of the inventory. The findings are listed below in a manner, which reflects the order of the countywide participation rates and use of recreation and community facilities in County Wicklow. (This does not infer a rationale for refusal or prioritisation of future funding for any sport, club or community group).

³ If any club wishes to be included in the databases please contact the Community and Enterprise section, Wicklow County Council

There are currently 39 GAA clubs in County Wicklow with 34 clubs owning their own grounds and currently using or developing these grounds as playing pitches. Aughrim plays at a community/parish ground while Fergal Ogs play at Bray Town Council provided pitches and all the remaining clubs currently lease or rent fields. The vast majority of GAA clubs with their own grounds have also developed clubhouse or changing facilities. GAA club grounds provide pitches for Gaelic football, hurling and camogie. GAA club grounds being located in every parish are often seen as the community field and as such often cater for local school sports days, town/village festivals, and the community games or athletics clubs.

There are 48 Soccer clubs, 23 clubs having a degree of secure tenure. Local authority provision of grounds is strongest in providing for soccer clubs with ground leases.

Wicklow County Council provides pitches for Ashford Rovers at Balinalea, Ashford, for 2 soccer clubs in Greystones while providing a third club, Greystones AFC, grounds subject to a long term lease. In Bray Town Council Area all 8 soccer clubs are provided for by the local authority, however Bray Wanderers Carlisle Grounds is subject to a substantial term lease. Wicklow Town Council provides grounds for the 2 soccer clubs in the town at Whitegates, similarly Arklow Town Council provides for 2 soccer clubs in Arklow.

Arklow Town Soccer Club has developed both excellent player and spectator facilities at Lamberton but is subject to a medium term private lease. Dunlavin, Conary, and both Kilcoole clubs have their own grounds while Newtown, Aughrim Rangers and Enniskerry play at community or parish owned grounds. The vast remainder of clubs currently play on rented farmer's fields subject to short term or yearly renewed leases. With little or no security of tenure, the result has been little or no development of proper changing and shower facilities at the county's soccer pitches.

Golf clubs in County Wicklow have proliferated in recent years with 25 golf clubs currently located in County Wicklow. This includes South County Golf Course near Brittas in South Dublin, whose clubhouse and part of the course is located within County Wicklow. There are also plans for new courses in Macreddin, Aughrim. All golf clubs in County Wicklow have fine clubhouses and changing facilities on location at the course.

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There are rugby clubs in Greystones, Wicklow, Arklow and Rathdrum which all have their own grounds and facilities. Like many GAA clubs, Wicklow's rugby clubs all own their own grounds

and are open to other community groups and schools to hold events or annual sports days at their facilities.

Badminton is played in parish and community halls in 15 registered clubs in the county but also in numerous social clubs countywide. Most of these halls were not purpose built for badminton and consequently many do not meet standard size, i.e. ceiling heights are often too low.

There are four tennis clubs in County Wicklow located in Greystones, Bray, Wicklow and Arklow and all four have well developed facilities for their members.

There has been an increase in demand for new/alternative sports, especially in the East of the county. Such sports include skateboarding and baseball. There is currently there is no provision for these activities.

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There are currently 2 swimming pools in County Wicklow open to the public, located at Arklow and Wicklow. Both pools were part funded by the local Town Councils. Plans are underway for the provision of a swimming pool in Greystones in conjunction with the local community, and also in Bray.

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2.3. Community Space - Community Centres / Parish Halls

There are approximately 132 parish or club halls or community centres in County Wicklow, which serve as meeting space and as centres for local small-scale indoor sports such as badminton or bowls, martial arts or dance. A local survey of community/parish centres/halls was undertaken in order to assess an appropriate minimum quantitative standard for provision of community space in new developments or growing towns. The provision of community space i.e. community centre/hall, sports halls, meeting rooms, youth resource centres was assessed in a number of settlements. The survey indicated a number of typical model sizes of Community/Parish centre/hall around County Wicklow. This includes a small size ranging 300m² - 310m², a medium size ranging 600m² - 800m² and a large size, existing or planned⁴ in rapidly developing towns, ranging 1,200m² to 2,000m². The largest existing centres/halls in County Wicklow are in the well-established

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⁴ Granted Planning Permission but not yet constructed. The information pertaining to the specific examples of sample community/parish halls and resource centres is held by the Office of Community sand Enterprise.

towns of Arklow and Bray and in small but strong rural communities such as Roundwood.

However it must be noted that provision or development of community space is 'uneven', and tends to occur in stages when the population surpasses certain population threshold levels. In addition sports club pavilions, scout dens and parish/club halls etc. are at present promoted as 'community space' and this must be factored into account when assessing community need.

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2.4. Sports Club Assessment Survey

During the autumn of 2002 a detailed sports club assessment survey was sent to sports clubs in County Wicklow. A total of seventy- three responses were obtained and out of these there were seventy usable questionnaires. The survey was a key part of the consultation with the sports clubs in the development of the Sports and Recreation Policy.

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The survey had a number of key objectives as follows:

- To provide information on the management issues facing clubs
- To provide information on the opportunities and threats perceived by clubs
- To examine the collaboration and partnership between various clubs
- To provide analysis of the clubs plans for future expansion and the difficulties surrounding this expansion
- To give details on the additional community or recreational facilities that the club would like to see in their area or in the county as a whole

The clubs who responded to the survey were engaged in a wide range of activities ranging from athletics to sailboat racing. Table 1 indicates the range of activities engaged in by the clubs by percentage of responses.

Table 1 Activities

Activity	Percentage of Responses (N=94)
Soccer	14.9
Gaelic Football	13.8
Athletics	7.4
Camogie	7.4
Hurling	7.4
Badminton	6.4

Ladies Gaelic Football	6.4
Tennis	3.2
Bowls	3.2
Cricket	2.1
Gymnastics	2.1
Rugby	2.1
Squash	2.1
Track and field	2.1
Other	18.1

As can be seen in table 1 the main activities engaged in by the clubs are soccer and Gaelic Games. Information was sought from the clubs on opening hours and from the responses it was clear that the majority of the clubs operate in the evenings during the week and during the day at weekends when the majority of matches are played.

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There was significant difference in the size of club in both terms of membership as regards both playing and non-participating members such as administrators and social members with playing membership ranging from eight to eight hundred and seventeen. The clubs with the largest playing membership were the soccer, GAA and tennis clubs. It is interesting to note that the boating and sailing club had the highest number of non-participating members. Approximately sixty four percent of the clubs surveyed have a playing/ participating membership of less than one hundred while just over seventeen percent have over two hundred playing/participating members.

The overwhelming majority of the clubs, ninety five percent, operate from a specific location. However when asked if the club owned the facility only 31.4 percent said they did with 67.1 percent of the clubs stating that they did not own the facility or the grounds from which the club operated. This raises the interesting question of who owns the facilities if the clubs do not. Table 2 highlights the ownership status of the facilities used by the clubs.

Table 2 Ownership of Facilities used by the clubs

Ownership	Percentage
Private Operator	10
Parish/ Congregation	8.6
Community	11.4
Local Authority	20
Other Club	17.1
School	18.6
Other	2.9

As well as differences in the size of the clubs surveyed there were also differences in the level of facilities available to the clubs as can be seen in Table 3 which highlights a number of facilities.

Table 3. Existing Facilities

Facility	Percentage
Clubhouse	54.3
Dressing Rooms	64.3
Showering Facilities	55.7
Meeting Rooms	47.1
Hall	44.3

It is worth noting that 71.4 percent of the clubs are not happy with the facilities they have available, as they feel it is not adequate for the clubs needs. The facilities required by clubs range from toilet facilities, showers, to gyms and all weather pitches.

2.5. Sports Club Assessment Survey: The Issues

The main management issues facing the clubs relate to finances and fundraising, how to maintain and improve the number of volunteers active in the club and how to compete with other sports to maintain and increase membership. There are many factors that contribute to a shortage in membership. The main factor however could be said to be a lack of promotion of facilities/clubs.

2.5.1. Volunteerism

The role of volunteers is integral to the successful running of the sports clubs surveyed with only 3 (4.3%) of the clubs having full-time staff and 7 (10.1 %) having part-time staff. Only 5.7 percent of the clubs employ staff under the community employment scheme and as this scheme has been cut back there is no potential for further employment for clubs. Therefore it is important to note that 81.4 percent of the clubs are entirely dependent on volunteers, as they do not employ staff. The number of full-time volunteers available to clubs ranges from 1 to 10 while the number of voluntary part time ranges from 1 to 50. Nearly seventeen percent of the clubs saw volunteerism as an important issue due to the fact that a number of the clubs are solely dependent on volunteers for their management and administration and therefore the retention of existing volunteers and the attraction of more volunteers is of major concern.

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2.5.2. Funding

Lack of proper financing is cited by the clubs as preventing them from investing in new facilities and the upkeep of existing facilities for members and developing new grounds to cater for the growth in population. This has resulted in some young people being excluded from membership of some of the clubs due to the financial situation facing clubs. Two of the clubs raised the issue of rising insurance costs which can be seen as diverting necessary money away from investment in facilities. It is also important to point out that many of the clubs are dependent on fundraising and this places a lot of pressure on the volunteers who run the clubs.

While funding is an important issue for the clubs only 15.7 percent had applied for funding under the Sports Capital Programme and 21.4 percent for national lottery funding. Of the clubs who applied for funding under the sports capital programme 63.6 percent were successful while 73.3 percent of the applicants to the national lottery received funding. 22.2 percent of the clubs who were successful in their applications experienced difficulties when it came to drawing down the money they were allocated. This shows a need to promote these schemes and support clubs in applying for them.

2.5.3. Public consultation issues:

- **Responding to change** - Changing requirements and expectations necessitates the review of facilities not only in terms of current activities but so as to reposition them to respond to future needs. The demand for recreation and leisure is growing. With significant population growth predicted there is a need to use resources wisely and provide an increased array of facilities and services to meet this need.
- **Partnership and co-operation** –increase provision and maximise the usefulness of facilities in co-operation and partnership with all relevant stakeholders especially those most at risk from exclusion from sport and recreation.
- **Open space** - Increase availability of local open space in all residential areas
- **Access for all** - Review planning and design practices and usage policies to increase accessibility and benefits especially to local residents. Council should adopt access for all abilities as a first principle of design and make provision for the needs of those with disabilities.
- **Youth** - Develop an adequate response to the needs of young people as defined by young people themselves with a recognition that young people are not a homogeneous group but have a variety of needs and interests. Young people are taking less exercise for a variety of reasons. Many young people are at risk

of alienation from competitive elements of sport and recreation with factors such as disappointment from not making the team.

- **Volunteerism** -The culture of volunteerism appears to be withering away in modern society. Existing community organisations find it hard to recruit activists, members are aging and people are becoming 'burnt out' from over-commitment. Organisations need rejuvenation. They need to consider ways of making themselves more attractive to younger people. This may require some difficult decisions about changing structures and / or leadership. Young people may be reluctant to become involved. They may be suspicious of an adult agenda or have difficulty in relating to it. The need for more adult volunteers is obvious. Training could provide adults with an incentive to participate and increase their commitment. Specific training needs that were identified are child protection issues, dealing with disruptive young people and children who have problems.
- **Insurance costs** – identified widely as a barrier to provision of both facilities and activities and a drain on resources of clubs.
- **Funding** - Funding information is poor and forms are difficult to administer with technical assistance required.
- **Barriers** - Many clubs pursue a member's only policy. This can exclude those from lower socio-economic groups or those who do not wish to participate in competitive sports.

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2.6. Future Needs

One of the objectives of the survey was to see if the clubs had plans for future expansion and 64.3 percent stated that they had. Such clubs plans involved investment in new grounds, facilities and the upgrading of existing facilities. For 91 percent of the clubs planning expansion or upgrading of facilities, the capital investment required would require an increase in their annual expenditure. The timescale for the developments ranged between six months and ten years depending on the size and cost of the development.

Sixty percent of the clubs believed there was a need for additional community and recreational facilities in the county. Table 4 illustrates the facilities that the clubs would like to see developed.

Table 4 Facilities Required in County Wicklow: Sports Club Assessment

Facility	Percentage of Response
Swimming Pools	29.6
Community facilities and grounds	20.4
Athletics Tracks and field facilities	14.8
Playground/ facilities for youth	9.3
All weather grounds and facilities	5.5

Indoor sports facilities	5.5
Support for water based activities	3.8
Sports facilities	3.8
Squash clubs	1.9
Support for non traditional sports	1.9
Floodlit Tennis Facilities	1.9
Leisure centres	1.9

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Summary of Issues

- Volunteerism
- Inadequate facilities
- Promotion and information
- Funding
- Need for new facilities

2.7. Wicklow County Council and Community and Enterprise: The Issues as Planner and Provider

As previously noted in section 1.5 historical budgetary and infrastructural priorities have constrained Wicklow County Council in its investment in sport and recreation facilities and amenities in County Wicklow. In the absence of substantial local authority led development or a specific local authority funding programme, strong community groups and clubs, in particular the local parish or GAA club, have been to the forefront countywide and have developed and funded facilities for their local community. The enormous amount of time and money invested by community volunteers in the past is reflected in the standard of facilities to be seen in County Wicklow. The development of facilities in such a manner raises a number of issues:

The provision of such facilities has at times been subject to debate as to the owners and user rights of such facilities – club, parish or community.

In a predominantly urban context such community provision, through no fault of their own, has led to an uncoordinated delivery of community facilities and has not facilitated efficient use of multi-purpose or multi-use community facilities and amenities.

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There is a tendency for a lag in the provision of community facilities and amenities in rapidly expanding urban development centres.

A fast rising county population will continue to increase pressure on land for development and also increase pressure to preserve land for community facilities and amenities.

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In rural areas, formal and informal facilities enhance the quality of life of rural inhabitants yet dispersed low-density populations make it difficult to sustain many facilities. There is however duplication of facilities between schools and clubs.

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There are increasing demands for community facilities for sports and recreation activities, which are not established in an Irish context or are not provided with proper competitive facilities at present in County Wicklow. Such sports and recreation activities include skateboarding, Bmxing, baseball, water sports and basketball.

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A variety of standards exist on the provision of open space for sport and recreation including playing pitches. Appendix 1 of the County

Development Plan 1999 contains residential development standards and policy in relation to open space in new residential areas, varying from local open space for passive recreation to neighbourhood parks for organised active recreation (sport) and passive recreation. According to this standard, a neighbourhood park should be capable of accommodating areas of both active and passive play and recreation and include areas for such amenities as football pitches, tennis courts, netball or basketball courts, golf putting greens, children’s playlots, an athletics facility and car parks. The park should also incorporate a site for indoor recreation facilities and pavilion with dressing rooms related to the outdoor facilities. The standard used under the County Development Plan and various Local Area Plans countywide is a minimum of 2 hectares of public open space per 1,000 population. The County Development Plan adheres to the Department of the Environment Guidelines “A Parks Policy for Local Authorities” (1987). This document sets out a hierarchy of parks based on population units of 10,000. This recommends a neighbourhood Park of about 16ha or 40 acres and 2 Local Parks within a specified distance of the population to be served. Local Parks should be approximately 2 hectares in size.

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The County Wicklow Play Policy includes a specific objective for 0.2 Ha of equipped playspace per 1000 population and 0.6 Ha of passive play area. The 0.2 Ha of equipped playspace provides for both childrens play equipment specifically and also Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) facilities. The recommended minimum specification for a MUGA is 40m x 20m.⁵ A MUGA is an outdoor community space for youth to engage in sports and recreational activity in an informal and non-competitive environment and may cater for football, basketball, circuits, tennis, handball, volleyball, skateboarding and youth seating facilities⁶. More limited sites or locations could cater for a handball/tennis wall or ½ basketball court.

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The Department of the Environment Guidelines “A Parks Policy for Local Authorities” (1987)

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Many alternative open space standards, which provide for less land extensive field sports stipulate higher open space standards. Taking the UK as an example, the UK NPFA standard provides for rugby, soccer and cricket and this is in the context of a traditionally well funded and strong local authority system with direct provision and co-ordination of multi-use pitches. However the playing pitch sizes for soccer, cricket and rugby are not as large or extensive as those of indigenous Irish sports of Gaelic football and hurling. Therefore in an Irish context and given the wide range of sporting needs – soccer, Gaelic Games, rugby etc. the open space provision per 1000 population (or per dwelling) should be maximised and the

⁵ See Sport England on MUGA facilities www.sportengland.org

⁶ See Thames Valley Police Report on Teenage Facilities

promotion of multi-use facilities and a parks approach to provision be considered to ensure efficient use of community grounds and facilities.

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At present Wicklow County Council funds sport and recreation from:

- Existing council resources - Wicklow County Councils budget for Recreation and Amenity and The Community Grants Scheme.
- User charges
- Fundraising
- The Development Contribution Scheme
- Funding schemes from National bodies and Government Departments

It is unlikely that significant additional financial resources will be made available due to existing resource pressures that the Council already faces.

Section 3 – Policy

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3.0. Policy Context

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This section of the policy reviews briefly the existing national and local policy documents in relation to sport and recreation and also presents the existing and projected demographic profile of County Wicklow. The role of the Strategic Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area is introduced and a local area profile outlined.

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3.1. Sustainable Development

Sustainable Development is often defined as “*development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*”. The concept of Sustainable Development provides that community’s economic, social and environmental needs must be balanced in their future development. This is highlighted and endorsed by the Irish Government publication Sustainable Development: A Strategy for Ireland 1997. Similarly the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) 2002 identifies the associated issue of quality of life as a major theme in the NSS. More specifically “Outlook” identifies the concepts of sustainable communities and social inclusion as important elements of local sustainable development in County Wicklow.

3.2. Sustainable Communities

A Sustainable Community, as highlighted in “Outlook”, is closely related to the concept of a healthy community, and “Outlook” outlines factors such as lifestyle and access to sport and recreation as central to the concept of sustainable community. Sport and recreation, as important contributors to healthy and sustainable communities, have a crucially important role to play in creating attractive and healthy places to live and work and hence improve Wicklow’s quality of life. Providing access and opportunities for sport and recreation near to where people live can make an important contribution to sustainable development as it enhances peoples quality of life and reduces the need to travel, also reducing pollution. Sustainable and healthy communities can be supported through the implementation of positive sport and recreation policies and this sport and recreation policy aims to create such positive opportunities for an accessible and vibrant sport and recreation sector in County Wicklow.

3.3. Health

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The publication of the second National Health and Lifestyle Survey April 2002 provides an important picture of lifestyle data categorised by gender, age and social class, representing a snapshot of national health behaviour and identifies trends. The survey shows that we are turning into a nation of couch potatoes – eating more and exercising less. Obesity levels are now at a worrying 13% and only 50% of adults are engaging in some form of physical activity. The survey shows a contrast between genders with 54% women compared to 50% men said they engaged in some form of mild exercise most days. The survey also shows that negative health behaviour is especially prevalent in lower socio-economic groups.

Research has shown the benefits of a physically active lifestyle include reduced incidence of disease, obesity and a variety of physiological benefits and life long learning skills (Best Value through Sport). Sport and recreation creates opportunities for regular formal and informal exercise at a level and intensity that suits all ages due to the diverse nature and types of sports and recreation activities. In the light of these findings, increasing opportunities for participation in sport and recreation takes on a greater importance with regard to the health and wellbeing of the inhabitants of County Wicklow.

Increasingly unhealthy communities reduces the ability of those communities to mutually support each other in performing all the functions of life and in developing their maximum potential (Outlook, 2000). Equally social inequity reduces the opportunities for creating sustainable and healthy communities in County Wicklow. There is evidence to suggest that such inequalities to access can be addressed if approached in an innovative way.

3.4. Social Inclusion

Inequalities and discrimination exist in sport and recreation just as in society as a whole. Participation in recreation and sport has a beneficial social impact. Recreation and sport has an almost universal popularity and so has the ability to overcome barriers. Participation can build confidence, self-esteem and encourage strong community groups and strong sense of community.

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Sport and recreation can contribute to community development and social inclusion because it:

- Appeals directly to individuals interests and develops their potential and self-confidence

- Relates to community identity and encourages collective effort
- Helps build positive links with the wider community
- Focuses communities on the successes of their local teams and athletes, something which can very much rally and bond a community.

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Particular named groups who are most at risk of social exclusion have been identified by the Government's National Anti-Poverty Strategy. These are:

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- Women
- Children
- Young People
- Disabled persons
- Travellers
- Older people
- Migrants/ethnic minorities

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In addition research has shown that particular groups are less likely to partake in sporting and recreational activity. These are:

- Children
- Young people
- Older people
- People with disabilities

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This policy recognises the marginalised status of these groups and embraces its responsibility in this regard. This means in effect that these groups will be actively encouraged and resourced to engage in qualitative and meaningful sports/recreational activity.

The only way that this can be done effectively is through consultation. The Council must liaise closely with representative samples of all the marginalised groups in order to ascertain what their individual needs are in the area of sports and recreation.

3.4.1. Social Inclusion and Youth

Research has shown that the main support for inclusion processes is found in settings where young people are part of a club structure that is non-hierarchical; where activities are not exclusively based on power and performance models (Coakley, 2001); where pleasure and participation sports are the dominant activities; and where age integration is common.⁷

Coakley summarised the research with respect to youth development in physical recreation as follows:

Deleted: Groups most at risk from social exclusion have been identified under the 9 grounds of the Equal Status legislation. These are: ¶
 <#>Gender¶
 <#>Marital Status¶
 <#>Family Status¶
 <#>Sexual Orientation¶
 <#>Religious Belief¶
 <#>Age¶
 <#>Disability¶
 <#>Race¶

⁷ The role of Recreation in promoting Social Inclusion, Peter Donnelly and Jay Coakley, Laidlaw Foundation, 2002

" At the risk of oversimplifying an impressive array of research and theory on youth and youth development... positive transitions from childhood to adulthood are most likely when young people live in a context in which they are: (1) physically safe; (2) personally valued; (3) socially connected; (4) morally and economically supported; (5) personally and politically empowered; and (6) hopeful about the future."

If sport and recreation merely reproduces the powerlessness to which young people are subjected elsewhere, then its contribution to adolescent socialisation and the social inclusion of youth may be reduced or inconsequential. The proposal here is that recreation provides alternative forms of learning for youth and opportunities for engagement that can ultimately be used to teach skills that promote civic engagement and contribute to the overall holistic development of individuals.

3.4.2 Social Inclusion, Sport and Geographical Locations

The location of sports facilities must be strategic rather than arbitrary and it must be needs based. The main types of locations which must be addressed can be summarised as follows:

- Urban areas
- Rural areas
- Local authority housing estates

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3.4.3 Opportunities for all in Minority/Alternative Sports

Irish culture, society and media has tended to promote certain games over others and to lend more status to them. While this can have quite a positive and motivating impact on the athletes taking part in these sports, many other would be athletes who may not be interested in these particular games become alienated. A key element of this policy is to develop a healthy attitude among all towards sport and recreation. Thus, it is important that the variety of alternative and minority sports which are on offer in County Wicklow be supported and promoted both in terms of the clubs/organisations involved and in terms of encouraging participation.

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3.5. National Policy

Irish Sports Council Statement of Strategy 2003 -2005

The Irish Sports Council (ISC) strategy outlines the economic and social context, which influences all aspects of sport. In economic

terms the Irish Sports Council strategy is appearing at a time when the Irish economy is slowing down and which may constrain the ability to support sport and recreation. In social terms our lifestyles are becoming more sedentary. More time is being spent commuting. The population is increasing but also ageing. More people are living alone. There is less time for voluntary activity. Overall today's lifestyle often limits the opportunities to participate in sport and recreation activities. In addition, certain sectors of the population experience barriers to participating in sport and recreation.

The Irish Sports Council also provides an outline to national trends in sport. Those relevant are:

- We increasingly engage with sport as spectators rather than participants.
- Volunteerism is a problem. It is essential to the development of sport and recreation but people have less time.
- Increasing professionalisation of sport and the development of sport as a commodity could overshadow the personal benefits and achievements that come from participation. This could be counterbalanced by the promotion of participation especially in a non-competitive way.

The last five years have seen the strengthening of the three big field sports in Ireland. This has been coupled with the growth of minority/special interest/adventure sports – an international trend and one that is reflected in Wicklow in the increased demand for facilities for skateboarding, BMXing, [basketball](#), water sports and baseball.

The Irish Sports Council is responsible for the administration of the grants scheme for National Governing Bodies of Sport and grants schemes for Sports Partnerships

National Development Plan 2000 – 2006 and Department of Tourism Sport & Recreation

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The NDP 2000-2006 makes provision for a Cultural, Recreation and Sport Measure, with a total of €333.78 million planned expenditure for the Southern & Eastern Region. The Department will oversee the allocation of this funding. The Department is responsible for all capital grants to sports facilities, specifically the Sports Capital Programme and the Local Authority Swimming Pool Programme.

3.6. Local Policy

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"Outlook"

"Outlook" is the ten-year Strategic Plan for the Social, Economic and Cultural Development of County Wicklow. It was prepared by Wicklow County Development Board after a process of extensive public consultation. Wicklow County Development Board is a partnership of the main service providers in the county who are charged with the integration and co-ordination of service delivery in County Wicklow. "Outlook" sets a new agenda that includes sustainable communities, social inclusion, community involvement, healthy communities, sustainable development and supports facilities for young people. It sets out ways to create sustainable communities in terms of sport and recreation and these have been adhered to within this policy document.

Wicklow County Development Plan 1999

Wicklow County Development Plan 1999 sets out the framework for the proper planning and sustainable development of the whole area of County Wicklow and includes specific objectives for sports and recreation related activities. Variation 5.2 (adopted 25/6/01) identifies as policy objective of the council "to facilitate the provision of indoor and outdoor public recreational and sports facilities in co-operation with urban and town authorities and communities" and also "to facilitate the provision and development of cultural venues and arts activities".

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Variation 5.12 (adopted 5/6/01) outlines housing estate design and layout policy, and encourages safe pedestrian links and cycle-ways between housing areas and within housing developments. Recreation is also supported in amenity areas under section 3.11.2, which states that "the council will promote and encourage recreational use of coastline, rivers and lakes for activities such as game fishing, boating and sailing."

Appendix 1 of the County Development Plan 1999 also contains residential development standards and policy in relation to open space in new residential areas, varying from local open space for passive recreation to neighbourhood parks for organised active recreation (sport) and passive recreation. A neighbourhood park should be capable of accommodating football pitches, tennis courts, netball or basketball courts, golf putting greens, children's playlots, an athletics facility and car parks.

County Wicklow Play Policy

This play policy guides Wicklow County Council in the provision of play facilities and ensuring that the county is as child-friendly as possible, providing a safe and stimulating environment in which children can play. It was prepared after a public consultation process by the Strategic Policy Committee for Community, Cultural and Social Development.

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County Arts Plan 2003-2006

Provision for arts and culture is specified in both the Planning and Development Act 2000 and Local Government Act 2001. The County Wicklow Arts Plan 2003-2006 has been compiled by Wicklow Local Authorities to provide a strategic framework through which local arts development in County Wicklow will be implemented over a three-year period. The Plan is the result of research, consultation, project initiatives, implementation and evaluation since the current Arts Officer took up position in 1999. The Plan is policy based and considers four key policy objectives, which aim to work towards using resources in the County Arts Office in a more developmental way.

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Library Development Plan 2002-2006

The development of the library service is also a function of local authority under the Local Government Act 2001. The purpose of the public library is to support the community's needs for education, information, recreation, arts and culture. With thirteen branches throughout County Wicklow each providing free internet access, the Council regards the library service as an important resource in promoting its policy on social inclusion and in providing public access to the Information Society. The Library Development Plan outlines the development priorities of the library service for the next three years.

There are also a variety of Social Inclusion programmes, which are delivered at local level by Local Authorities and local community and local development organisations.

3.7. Current Population and Demographic Profile - County Wicklow

The 2002 census population of County Wicklow was 114,676 persons, an 11.7% increase on the 1996 population. The urban centres in Co. Wicklow are predominantly located in the East of the county. Bray is the main urban centre and indeed Bray is one of the

largest towns in the country. Other towns include Greystones, Wicklow Town and Arklow, all in the East, and Blessington in the extreme Northwest.

3.8. Population Projections – County Wicklow

The Strategic Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area (SPGGDA) is the regional plan framework which planning authorities in the counties of Dublin, Meath, Kildare and Wicklow must have regard to. Based on the provisions of the SPGGDA the 1999 County Development Plan forecasts a 2016 population of 144,500 based on local growth and regional growth identified by the Strategic Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area

Under the SPGGDA the Northeast of the County encompassing the Bray and Greystones/Delgany area comprises the Metropolitan Area. The remaining Hinterland Area includes Wicklow Town which has been designated as a “Primary Development Centre” and Arklow which has been designated as a “Secondary Development Centre”. It is these four settlements that are identified for major growth and expansion under the County Development Plan 1999. The County Development Plan 1999 has also identified towns and villages as local primary and secondary Growth Centres throughout the county to serve local need.

3.9. Local Area Profiles

SPGGDA & County Development Plan 1999: Regional & Local Growth

Growth Centre	2002 Population	Indicative Population 2010	Maximum Population 2016
Arklow	9,993	16,277	21,000
Bray	28,002	32,012	35,000
Greystones/Delgany	11,913	17,679	22,000
Wicklow/Rathnew	10,796	17,481	22,500
Total	60,704	83,449	100,500

County Development Plan 1999: Local Growth

Growth Centre	2002 Population	Indicative Population 2010	Maximum Population 2016
Ashford	1,356	2,295	3,000
Aughrim	871	1,516	2,000
Avoca	564	642	700
Baltinglass	1,260	1,969	2,500
Blessington	2,509	4,789	6,500
Carnew	809	1,204	1,500
Dunlavin	814	1,492	2,000
Kilcoole	2,826	3,782	4,500
Newcastle	851	1,222	1,500
Newtownmountkennedy	2,521	4,510	6,000
Rathdrum	1,387	3,166	4,500
Roundwood	518	622	700
Shillelagh	278	462	600
Tinahely	692	868	1,000
Total	17,256	28,539	37,000

The predicted population growth will have implications that include pressure on land use, provision of facilities for an increasing population and developing a sense of community.

The age profiles vary throughout the county giving rise to demands for different types of services. In some of the remoter parts there is a higher elderly component than in the expanding areas, which will need to cater for a more youthful population.

Nationally the trend is toward an increase in people living alone (ISP). This group will most likely be made up of more working age people living alone, more people living alone as a result of changes in the fabric of society. In areas most under pressure from Dublin a large sector of the population may well be commuting. Future provision of sporting and recreation provision will have to take account of this.

Therefore the issue of sport and recreation is influenced by the following factors:

- An expanding population
- A significant commuting population
- Expansion of existing areas identified in the Strategic Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area
- An varied age profile
- A portion of the population at risk of or already experiencing social exclusion

Section 4 - Sports and Recreation Policy

4.0. Recommendations

All aspects of this policy document will be underpinned by the principles of sustainable development and social inclusion even where it is not explicitly stated. The Sports and Recreation Policy also proposes the adoption of a mission statement based on increasing participation in sport and recreation and tackling disadvantage in order to achieve sustainable and healthy communities in County Wicklow.

4.1. Sport and Recreation Policy Vision Statement and Policy Statements

Wicklow County Council will work to contribute to the improvement of the health and well being of the inhabitants of County Wicklow and to facilitate participation in sport and recreation. This work will be guided by the principles of sustainable development and social inclusion and will be carried out in partnership and co-operation, to enable all members of the county to have equal access to sport and recreation facilities and opportunities for participating in the sport or recreation of their choice.

4.1.2. Provision of Facilities

1. 0. The Sports and Recreation Policy will inform a detailed area based paper on the provision of facilities being prepared as part of the Development Contribution Scheme for community facilities.

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It will include:

- A Community Facilities Hierarchy providing indicative levels of provision
- Tools for the assessment of need for facilities taking into account both existing and future developments.

1.1. In the provision of facilities the Council will consider:

- The potential for the provision of community run, multi-use facilities.
- The potential for a sport and recreation use, to contribute to wider objectives for that area such as social regeneration, social inclusion or employment.
- The potential for added-value such as sitting out areas, or informal meeting places for the community

- 1.2. The Council will work in partnership and co-operation, where appropriate, with organisations and the community to maximise provision, maintenance and usage of sport and recreation facilities and, where appropriate the use of Public Private Partnerships (PPPs).
- 1.3. The Council will ensure community access to new sports facilities, in cases where they will be operated by the private sector through PPP.
- 1.4. All new community halls, community playing pitches and multi-use centres should include changing and showering facilities suitable for all ages and genders and abilities.
- 1.5. The upgrading of existing facilities will be funded where appropriate and such facilities should be made suitable for all ages and genders and abilities.
- 1.6. ~~The Council will promote and develop recreation and leisure opportunities within the natural environment within the principles of sustainable development and in partnership with key stakeholders in a way that addresses conflicts between different users and interest groups.~~
- 1.7. The Council will recognise countryside recreation as a growing area of leisure activity and ensure that the new and developing facilities for countryside recreations within Wicklow are resourced, provided, managed and supported in a strategic way. The Council will work with the County Development Board regarding Action 16, "Outlook" under Urban Shadow, which seeks to encourage dialogue between landowners and interested users on access issues with a view to resolving same.
- 1.8. ~~The Council recognises the value and extent of the Wicklow Uplands as a recreational resource and the increased interest in hillwalking and outdoor leisure pursuits. The Council will work with the County Development Board regarding Action 16, "Outlook" under Urban Shadow, which seeks to encourage dialogue between landowners and interested users on access issues with a view to resolving same.~~
- 1.9. The Council will have regard to changing needs and new sports and recreation activity which may not necessarily have a national or historical context yet have a significant following within the county or meet needs not met by traditional sports.

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The Council will continue to research to ensure that initiatives match community needs and sporting trends. This will ensure the widest possible participation in sport and recreation activities.

1.10. The Council will continue to support and facilitate the growth and development of existing sports and recreation clubs and organisations in County Wicklow in order to maximise sports and recreation participation countywide.

1.11. The provision of a facility will be prioritised when there is a community demand for a particular facility, and where recommended for funding, the local community should be involved in the decision making process and have some involvement in the design, operation and management of the facility.

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4.1.3. Planning

1.0. The Council will ensure a planned approach to the provision of sport and recreation facilities, based on sound assessments of current and future needs for strategic, specialist and local facilities and guided by the research findings of this policy document.

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1.1. The Council will ensure where possible that proper provision of sport and recreation facilities is provided as part of new developments. As a guideline, the Council will in future aim to make provision for an average of 200m² multi-use community space per 1000 population, or where an identified need exists, which includes provision for sports and recreation activity.

1.2. The Council will provide for open space including provision for sport and recreation according to the minimum provision of 2.0Ha. per 1,000 population under Action 41 of Sustainable Communities in 'Outlook'.

1.3. The Council will ensure that within all Local Area Plans (LAPs) appropriate and sufficient land is clearly identified for amenity and sporting and recreation uses and provide protection for open space that is or has the potential to be of value to the community.

1.4. The Council will encourage good practice in the design of sporting and recreational facilities, which will enhance the

utilisation and value of community infrastructure and open space thus giving maximum value on investment, address the needs of various groups and lead to increased participation.

- 1.5. The Council will promote accessibility by locating local facilities within walking distance, cycling distance or on public transport routes and having regard to issues of security and personal safety.
- 1.6. The Council will seek to ensure that open spaces and recreation areas are located, designed and maintained so as to minimise the risk of crime and vandalism by:
 - Clustering facilities
 - Locating facilities in places which are overlooked, providing indirect supervision
 - Providing teenage facilities such as shelters⁸, seating areas and MUGA facilities⁹ in accordance with County Wicklow Play Policy open space standards.
- 1.7. Larger facilities, which are likely to attract users from a wide catchment area, should have regard to the SPGGDA and County Settlement Strategy and maximise potential access and minimise travel for all. Deleted: um
- 1.8. A balance will be made regarding the needs of rural communities and the practicalities of provision in rural areas. The dual use of facilities such as schools and multi-purpose use of facilities will be encouraged. Deleted: low level provision
- 1.9. A parks approach to development of sports and recreation facilities in urban centres will be encouraged in order to facilitate efficient use of multi-purpose community facilities and amenities through clustering of facilities in accordance with "A Parks Policy for Local Authorities " (1987)
- 1.10. The Council will promote greater use of the sea and maritime facilities as a recreational resource and will seek to improve access to the coastline for all users.

4.1.4. Sustainable Development and Sustainable Communities

- 1.0. The Council will seek to contribute to the health, well being and quality of life of those taking part in leisure activities

⁸ See Thames Valley Police Report on Teenage Facilities

⁹ See Sport England on MUGA facilities www.sportengland.org

without destroying the natural resources upon which sport and recreation depends. In this regard the Council will seek to maintain the quality of the environment and minimise adverse impacts resultant from sport and recreation.

- 1.1. The Council will seek to safeguard access to and prevent loss of existing sport, recreation and amenity space and facilities. The loss of existing public sport and recreation open space should be avoided unless alternative recreational facilities are provided. Where development is unavoidable the Council will ensure a suitable replacement facility be provided at a suitable location.
- 1.2. The Council will ensure sport and recreation opportunities are made an integral part of urban and rural development and that such sport and recreation amenities are developed and phased in tandem with residential development to create and maintain sustainable and healthy communities.

4.1.5. Social Inclusion

- 1.0. The Council will work to ensure that all members of the community have equal access to opportunities for participation in sport and recreation activities and that the particular needs of different groups are incorporated into the planning, design and management of facilities.
- 1.1. The principles of the community development approach should underpin and build on the ways in which local authority sport and leisure strategies and services are developed.
- 1.2. The Council will ensure that specific emphasis is placed on the needs of groups most at risk of social exclusion. This will be done in consultation with the relevant groups and will have regard to current and future equality legislation.
- 1.3. The Council will provide support and information to groups and clubs to develop and implement policies which will address discrimination and inequalities and increase participation among excluded groups in conjunction with the planned Local Sports Partnership (LSP) and by working in partnership with local and national agencies.
- 1.4. The Council will seek to ensure that pricing policies do not create avoidable barriers for people to use facilities and seek

to prevent the evolution of a two-tier market dominated by exclusive members only clubs.

- 1.5. The Council will seek to secure policies and concessions regarding social inclusion that address barriers to participation by various groups that traditionally experience exclusion and including those who are geographically isolated or whose health could benefit from greater recreational activity. This will ensure that the social and economic advantages of facilities are enjoyed by all.
- 1.6. The principle of accessibility for all will be at the core of the provision of all facilities, buildings and amenities including community facilities and amenities. Wicklow County Council will have regard to the Barcelona Declaration and adopt and support "Building for Everyone", published by the *National Disability Authority of Ireland*, to ensure that the needs of all people, including those with special needs, are taken into consideration in the design and construction of all community facilities and amenities. This refers not only to physical accessibility but also to the active participation, enjoyment and ownership of all sections of a community to such community facilities and amenities.
- 1.7. The Council will promote increased participation by young people in sport and recreation, especially disengaged youth.
- 1.8. The Council will prioritise sport and recreation programmes and facilities which demonstrate a proactive approach to overcoming inequalities and addressing the barriers that exclude people from participation.
- 1.9. The Council in association with the planned Local Sports Partnership (LSP) will build an information base against which future progress can be measured.

4.1.6. Funding

- 1.0. The Council will seek to maximise funding for sport and recreation in County Wicklow and ensure the maximum return is gained from investments in sport and recreation facilities and amenities in the County.
- 1.1. The Council will work to promote a co-ordinated approach to maximising the opportunities to access funding under national funding schemes for sport and recreation such as grants from

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national funding bodies such as The Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation, The Irish Sports Council and local sources.

- 1.2. The Council will support the development of a Local Sports Partnership in conjunction with the County Development Board, which will provide technical assistance in applications for funding to national bodies.
- 1.3. The Council will explore and maximise opportunities for funding for facilities through Public Private Partnerships (PPPs).
- 1.4. Facilities that can be substantially funded by alternative bodies at national level, or private operators will not be prioritised in this policy document.
- 1.5. The Council will promote the maximisation of funding from all sources to provide for sports and recreation facilities and amenities in County Wicklow.

4.1.7. Partnership

- 1.0. The Council will also work more closely with schools, clubs and private providers as partners in sports development and community recreation provision and develop a more integrated approach to programmes and events to meet sport and recreation objectives such as social inclusion, increased utilisation of resources and enhanced physical activity.
- 1.1. The Council will also forge stronger links with other government, commercial and voluntary sector organisations to deliver more integrated opportunities. The Council internally will work in an integrated way to provide an holistic approach to sports provision.
- 1.2. The Council will encourage partnerships that involve sharing grounds, equipment, infrastructure or running and maintenance costs. These partnerships may also provide opportunities for sharing of best practice and promotion of activities.
- 1.3. Local Sports Partnership (LSP)

The Council will seek to establish a Local Sports Partnership in County Wicklow in association with the Irish Sports Council under

Action 36 of Sustainable Communities of 'Outlook'. The 3 main functions of Local Sports Partnerships are:

Information: to establish a consultative forum, initiative research, compile a sports directory and database, identify needs and resources to form the basis of local planning

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

Implementation: develop a strategic plan for local sports, appoint a professional administrator and secure related support services, select participation programmes for LSP modified to suit local needs, increase impact of national programmes delivered locally, market and promote sport.

1.4. The key aims of such a sports partnership in County Wicklow will be to:

- Enhance planning of sport at local level
- Increase levels of local participation, especially amongst specific target groups such as older people, youth, girls and women, people with disabilities, and those who live in identified disadvantaged communities
- Enhanced local coach deployment
- Club development
- Volunteer training through the implementation of a countywide programme of action to recruit and support volunteers in sporting clubs/organisations
- Development of a full sports database and local directories of sports bodies and facilities to be accessible via www.wicklow.ie
- Encourage better use of existing facilities
- Develop a strategy to implement the County Wicklow Sports and Recreation Policy to provide clear priorities for local facility provision and improvement, with related quality management initiatives
- Develop a countywide action programme to facilitate School/club/community links
- Plan and undertake local sports events/festivals
- Liase with existing local authority, statutory and non-statutory development agencies and organisations in County Wicklow to maximise efficient allocation of resources.

- Develop a countywide programme of support for existing sporting clubs/organisations to review their membership policies from a social inclusion perspective
- Support clubs/organisations of different sporting codes to share resources and facilities where possible.
- Make submissions to strategic planning and policy consultation documents to inform future planning and policy that affects sport and recreation in County Wicklow.
- Seek to co-ordinate development opportunities between local clubs/organisations to create economies of scale and cost savings which maximize efficient use of limited resources.

4.1.8. Volunteerism

- 1.0. The Council will continue to be involved in the People of the Year Award to acknowledge and appreciate the contribution made by volunteering to sport and recreation.
- 1.1. The Council will support initiatives that provide training to volunteers in the area of sport and recreation. Specific areas of training will include child protection issues and working with difficult children. Accredited training is recognised and will be supported as a mechanism for providing employment opportunities for those who wish to translate their voluntary activity into a profession.
- 1.2. The Council will review and improve the Community Grants Scheme and will continue to support voluntary activity through this grant scheme.

4.1.9. Information and Promotion

- 1.0. The Council will support the development of a Local Sports Partnership by the County Development Board
- 1.1. The Council will support the improvements required in information provision and promotion of opportunities for participation in sport and recreation through www.wicklow.ie, local authority newsletters, the library service and other information points.

Appendix 1

Planning and Development Act 2000

The Planning and Development Act 2000 includes specific objectives for sport and recreation and related activities and makes it mandatory to plan for such land use activities and zonings. Section 9 and section 10 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 makes it a function of the planning authority (Council) to make a development plan and provide for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. With regard to sport and recreation, section 10 of the 2000 Act requires a development plan to include objectives, including:

- (a) The zoning of land including for recreational and open space
- (d) The integration of the planning and sustainable development of the area with the social, community and cultural requirements of the area and its population
- (j) The preservation, improvement and extension of amenities and recreational amenities

The First Schedule of the 2000 Act further defines purposes for which objectives may be included for the development plan and of most relevance to the sports and recreation strategy includes specific references to community facilities (Part III), and environment and amenities (Part IV).

Community facilities includes:

- (1)(b) centres for the social, economic, recreational, cultural, environmental, or general development of the community,
- (1)(e) recreational facilities and open spaces, including caravan and camping parks, sports grounds and playgrounds.

Environment and amenities includes:

- (8) preserving any existing public right of way, including, in particular, rights of way which give access to seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other place of natural beauty or recreational utility, and
- (9) reserving land as open spaces whether public or private or as a public park, public garden or public recreation space.

Section 48 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 also allows for the inclusion of conditions when granting planning permission to require payment of a contribution in respect of public infrastructure and facilities benefiting development in the area, to form the basis of a development contribution scheme. According to Section 48 (17) "public infrastructure and facilities" is defined to include both

(a) the acquisition of land, and, (b) the provision of open spaces, recreational and community facilities and amenities and landscaping works, as defined above according to the First Schedule of the 2000 Act.

Local Government Act 2001

The Local Government Act 2001 establishes and defines the role and powers of local authorities and defines the variety of functions of local authorities. This Act gives the power to local authorities to intervene directly in the community interest and offer assistance and direct provision of land, facilities and services. Section 63 of the 2001 Act states the functions of local authorities, including the taking of such action as it considers necessary or desirable to promote the community interest in accordance with section 66. Section 66 defines the role and powers of local authorities in the promotion of interests of local communities which includes activities where "it promotes, directly or indirectly, social inclusion or the social, economic, environmental, recreational, cultural, community or general development of the administrative area..." For the purposes of such activities the local authority may, under section 66(2), in summary, provide assistance through financial means, land, structures or facilities, services of staff or professional assistance. Furthermore under section 66(4), in summary, the local authority may directly carry out and maintain works, provide and maintain land, structures or facilities, provide utilities, equipment or services that benefit the local community. Section 67 outlines such activities, and those relevant to sport and recreation include:

- (i) general recreational and leisure activities,
- (ii) sports, games and similar activities,
- (vii) the public use of amenities (both natural and made or altered by human intervention).

Schedule 13 of the 2001 Act defines the terms in section 67. (i) General recreational and leisure activities is defined as including the provision of parks, gardens, open spaces, playgrounds, play equipment, animals, picnic sites, viewing points, footpaths, walks, boats, piers, other landing places and marinas. (ii) Sports, games and similar activities includes the provision (both indoor and outdoor) of playing fields, athletics tracks, swimming pools and other bathing places, sports centres, gymnasias and other facilities and the holding of sporting events. (vii) The public use of amenities includes the provision of access, signs, vehicle parks, safety equipment, information and refreshment facilities, sanitary accommodation, utilities, seating, shelter and any other apparatus, equipment or anything else necessary to facilitate such use.

Summary Sport and Recreation Amenities Provided for under the Local Government Act 2001

- parks
- gardens
- open spaces
- playgrounds
- play equipment
- animals
- picnic sites
- viewing points
- footpaths
- walks
- boats
- piers
- other landing places and marinas
- playing fields
- athletics tracks
- swimming pools and other bathing places
- sports centres
- gymnasias and other facilities
- holding of sporting events
- provision of access, signs, vehicle parks
- safety equipment
- information and refreshment facilities
- sanitary accommodation
- utilities
- seating
- shelter
- equipment to facilitate such use