

Longford Sports Partnership Strategy 2018-2022



**SPORT
IRELAND**



— SPORT IRELAND —



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Message from Mr. John Treacy, Chief Executive of Sport Ireland



I would like to congratulate Longford Sports Partnership on the development of their third strategic plan. Sport Ireland has always stressed the importance on ensuring sport is inclusive and attracts participants from every corner of Ireland, from every age group and from all social backgrounds. This is a fundamental principle of the Local Sports partnership network and I am delighted to note the particular empathises Longford Sports Partnership have placed on this area of work throughout their strategy.

The partnership model adopted by Longford Sports Partnership, along with their proactive and ongoing approach to strengthening local relationships, has always helped ensure that communities have access to sport and physical activity opportunities across the county. Assisting clubs, volunteers and other organisations to capacity build helps ensure that investment in sport is sustainable, reaches those with the capacity to deliver results and allows for greater reach into targeted communities.

The culture of participation in sport and physical activity differs from county to county and is likewise reflected from local community to local community. The identified need within this strategy, to maintain an understanding of local issues, emerging challenges and opportunities, highlights Longford Sports Partnerships awareness of the difficulties of a blanket approach and the potential for success through ongoing local stakeholder engagement.

The recently released National Sports Policy 2018-2027 highlights the significant contribution Local Sports Partnerships make to the sustainable development of sport at a local level, their consistent presence and perseverance in ensuring people have access to sport and their ability to activate those currently underrepresented in sport. Since 2008, the contribution of Longford Sports Partnership to this widely held assessment has been noteworthy and I hope that the development of this latest Longford Sports Partnership strategy will continue to deliver results.

As with all strategic planning processes, the published document is simply the final phase and it is the consultation, evaluation and debate carried out during the process which gives life and value to this strategy. I would like to thank all stakeholders who were involved in the consultation process and the partner organisations who continue to contribute to the ongoing success of Longford Sports Partnership.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Treacy', written over a decorative background of blue and white dots and squares.

Message from LSP Chair - Mr. Stephen Coy



As Chairperson of Longford Sports Partnership, I am delighted to present this third strategic plan.

Involvement in sport can bring many benefits including better physical and mental health, as well as more social integration and change. Research is showing that more people throughout Ireland are engaging in more physical activity and this plan aims to capitalise on this momentum, to reach out to those who are inactive while supporting those already taking part to continue participation.

In Longford Sport Partnership we are a collaborative organisation, composed of statutory agencies, sporting and community organisations. We have been fortunate to have an extensive network of coaches, sports clubs and community groups through which we reach people of all ages and from various communities throughout County Longford.

We will continue to develop our leadership role to engage and assist those who work at a local level to promote sport and physical activity. Our review highlighted the valuable contribution of the statutory agencies towards the work we do in terms of funding, resources and expertise. I wish to thank those organisations and Sport Ireland for their invaluable contribution and I look forward to their continued support for the implementation of our third strategy.

This new strategy will see us reaching out to more people in Longford, including those who are most marginalised, to encourage their on-going participation in sport and recreation in their communities. With our increased research and evaluation focus we will have a stronger evidence base of the impact and outcomes of our work, thus supporting healthier and active communities throughout County Longford.

We are very grateful to all who contributed to the review and the development of this strategic plan. I want to acknowledge and thank the members of the sporting and community sectors, the statutory agencies, our Board and our staff for their valuable contribution to creating our new strategy 2018-2022. I wish to thank all Board members and staff of Longford Sports Partnership for their committed contribution and achievements to date. I look forward to the successful implementation of this strategy led by our experienced Sports Co-ordinator, Siobhán McGuinness and our able and committed staff Michelle Shanley, Patricia Forde and Mary Duignan.

Our mission is two fold 'You Taking Part' through a collaborate, effective approach, and secondly collaboration with our partners, providing more opportunities, engagement and awareness around sport and physical activity. I believe that this strategy delivered in partnership with sporting, community and statutory bodies can contribute to a healthier, more active Longford.

Message from Sports Co-ordinator - Siobhán McGuinness



As Co-ordinator of Longford Sports Partnership, it is with great pleasure that we launch our third strategic plan, which we look forward to implementing over the next 5 years. While the plan outlines the many functions and priorities of the LSP, our commitment to increasing participation in sport and physical activity is a core feature of the plan. We aim to continue to provide quality participation opportunities which are inclusive of all ages, abilities and fitness levels. By achieving this we hope to inform, educate and enable the people of Longford to live a positive, healthy and balanced lifestyle. This strategy was developed following consultation with key stakeholders and a review of current research and trends in participation in physical activity. The Board was also guided by the National Sports Policy, the National Physical Activity Plan and the Healthy Ireland Framework, as well as the Local Economic and Community Plan.

Longford Sports Partnership's partnership approach to planning, delivering and resourcing of LSP projects, programmes and strategic direction has resulted in a greater impact within the communities. Our stakeholders have been key contributors in supporting us and the communities in which we work. We value their important commitment and the contribution of volunteers within sports clubs and community groups who are crucial in providing regular physical activity and sporting opportunities throughout the County of Longford.

I would like to thank the Board of Directors for their continued support and contribution of time and effort to the workings of Longford Sports Partnership. Thanks to Chief Executive of Sport Ireland, John Treacy and the extended Sport Ireland, Participation Unit for their constant encouragement, support and advice. We'd like to thank Longford County Council for their valued support in assisting the LSP with its day to day operations. Our gratitude is extended to Mr. Humphrey Murphy (ILC) for his professional consultation and advice during the development of this Plan. Finally, I would like to thank the staff of the LSP, tutors and volunteers for their assistance in the delivery of our programmes, without whom our goals could not be met.

The shared commitment and investment of resources by the sporting, community and statutory sectors in County Longford is vital towards achieving the goal of increased participation in sport and physical activity and we look forward to continuing to work with all involved towards realising the outcome of 'You taking part; more opportunities, engagement and awareness'.

Longford Sports Partnership's Strategy Introduction

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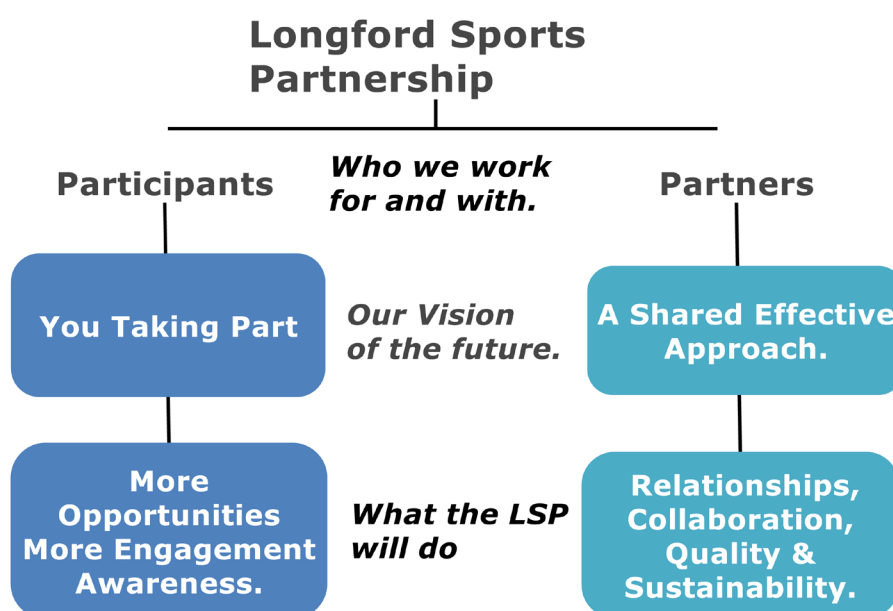
Who We Are and What We Do.

Longford Sports Partnership (LSP) was formed in 2008 under the auspices of the Longford County Development Board and latterly within the Community and Enterprise section of Longford County Council. We were established to increase participation in sport and physical activity through the effective planning of sport at local level to ensure that local resources are used to best effect.

Our role is to increase local participation in sports and physical activity, especially amongst specific target groups - older people, girls and women, people with disabilities, unemployed people and those who live in disadvantaged communities. We encourage and support people to participate in sports and physical activity throughout their life-stages. Every person, every age, every ability.

We partner with a variety of organisations and agencies for a coordinated approach to sports and physical activity development. We engage with groups and individuals to identify their needs and to encourage their participation. LSP supports the providers¹ of sports and physical activity to grow their capacity and respond to our community's expectations. In particular:

- ❑ We make people aware and we encourage them to take part in sports and physical activity.
- ❑ We partner with others so that there are diverse and inclusive sports and physical opportunities in the county.



¹Sports and physical activity providers include clubs, schools, community groups, youth clubs, leisure centres gyms and others.

Our Direction

The actions of LSP are primarily guided by local sports and physical activity needs as voiced by individuals, organisations and in local and national policies such as the:

- ❑ National Sports Policy 2018 – 2027.
- ❑ Longford County Development Plan 2015-2021
- ❑ Longford Local Development Strategy Rural Development Programme 2014-2020
- ❑ Longford Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2022
- ❑ County Longford Age Friendly Strategy 2015-2020

Why?

Sports and physical activity are essential in a healthy lifestyle, they also support social interaction and general wellbeing. Most of all they contribute to making our lives more fulfilling, enjoyable and longer.

How?

By encouraging and enabling people to make active recreation, physical activity, active play, sport, or whichever term you use, a part of your life. Taking part in walking or bowling, moderate activities like jogging, cycling and swimming, more intensive exercise classes, 5K or triathlons, they are all forms of sports or physical activity.

It is for you!

Sport and physical activity does not just happen in clubs and schools on pitches and tracks, increasingly we walk, hop, skip and run along pavements, in parks and forests, on lakes, rivers and surf and in fitness centers.

Meeting new people, getting to know your community, having great times with your children and friends, realising the best you, challenging yourself, improving your health, strengthening your wellbeing, gaining vitality and getting a great night's sleep.

What is Sport and physical activity.

Recreational Sport: all forms of physical activity which, through casual or regular participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being and at forming social relationships.

Physical Activity: any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure (The World Health Organisation).

Longford Sports Partnership (LSP), uses the term 'physical activity' to include non-competitive sporting type participation,

Taking part with a group of friends, your neighbours and with other individuals. The young, the very young and the older you, regardless of your ability, fitness or life-stage. There is a sport and physical activity for you.

Walk, run, stroll, play, skip, swim, glide, jump, kick, throw your way into sport at whatever level, compete if you want but always take part in some way.

Sport and Physical Activity is for you!

We!

We connect people with sport or physical activities, we listen to what is needed, we share information about what is available and we introduce new sports or programmes with our partners.

We work throughout County Longford and with everybody to keep sport and physical activity part of our daily life.

Our Board and Staff

The Board of the LSP has oversight of our strategic direction and our actions and includes many of our partners such as:

- ☐ Longford County Council
- ☐ Health Service Executive
- ☐ Longford & Westmeath Education and Training Board
- ☐ An Garda Síochána
- ☐ Longford Community Resources Clg.
- ☐ The Youth Sector
- ☐ Sports and Physical Facilities Providers
- ☐ Older Adults Representatives
- ☐ Disability Representatives
- ☐ Sporting Representatives

Our four-fulltime staff (Coordinator, Development Officers and Administrator), are supported by a network of sports delivery tutors, and together we realise our Strategic Plan and our annual action plans. These plans, their objectives and our activities result in the development and delivery of a range of sports and physical activity programmes throughout County Longford.



Our Partners



Our Partners

LSP works with a range of partners to strengthen and grow the range of enjoyable participation opportunities. Our strategic partners include schools, communities, clubs and commercial providers.

Schools, 'Make it so'

Schools shape us. Students make friends, develop their abilities and grow their future in our national and secondary schools. Schools are where most of us 'discovered' sport, and developed our attitudes towards it. Schools can be the source of a positive lifelong engagement with sport and physical activity and the LSP works with Schools to 'Make it so'. The LSP supports schools to develop a positive sports culture which is diverse and meaningful for everyone. We also connect schools with clubs and with each other to collaborate, share their expertise and provide sustainable participation opportunities.

Communities 'Where Champions Grow'

If we are fortunate we begin and live our lives as part of a community, it is where we interact and feel part of something, where our roots are. The LSP supports communities to make sports and physical activity a meeting ground for its members to participate, officiate or cheer on.

We work with community champions to identify the sports and physical activity needs and opportunities and to grow their sports culture and capacity. We involve these communities in the sports network, and we provide them with on-going support.

Sports Clubs

The sports clubs in the county can provide long-term pathways to grow and enjoy our ability as participants and volunteers. Sport club coaches, facilities and programmes have the potential to offer high-quality sports experiences for everyone.

The LSP works with sports clubs so that they can include all abilities and ages and make sport an enjoyable activity. While the governing body for each sport has responsibility for their clubs, the LSP supports club governance, training and education opportunities and their development of specific sports and physical activity programmes. We also promote and assist in the formation of new clubs.

Youth Clubs

Youth clubs provide valuable places for young people to meet new friends and have a voice. These clubs often recognise the value of sport and physical activity as a means of encouraging social interaction and for fun. The LSP supports the staff and volunteers of youth clubs to identify and deliver the sports and physical activities which benefits their members.

Commercial Providers

There is an increasing number of 'for profit' sports and physical activity organisations in County Longford. Self-employed tutors, gyms, leisure centres, hotel swimming pools and outdoor sports providers offer opportunities for 'pay to play' participation. These operators can provide a range of mobile sports services which can reach out into various communities. The LSP works with the commercial sector so that their facilities and programmes are as relevant and as accessible as possible to the community of County Longford.

How we do it:

To make sport relevant and lifelong for everyone in the county, LSP has delivered, coordinated, supported or lead in the provision of a wide range of sport and physical activities. In our new strategy, we continue to collaborate with others to expand the diversity and the volume of sports and physical opportunities in County Longford. The following are examples of the categories of sports and physical activity which we support:

- ❑ Specific sports Programmes: Paddles Up, Tag Rugby, Sports-hall Athletics, Late Night Soccer League, Playground Markings.
- ❑ Target group participation programmes: Women on the Water, Sports Inclusion Programmes, Men's Shed Health, Pony Riding and Animal Welfare project, Kick Off With English Language Skills.
- ❑ Generic sports training for volunteers: Safeguarding children, Inclusion Training, Sports Injuries/First Aid courses, Garda Vetting Training.
- ❑ Development and Planning Resources: directories of sports bodies and facilities, governance support, network linkages, event creation and planning.

LSP also supports and promotes sports and physical activity opportunities in County Longford which are organised by various groups and clubs such as the Royal Canal run, Active Schools Week, Longford Sports Awards, Longford Marathon, Community 5/10k (e.g. Abbeyshrule and Ardagh).

We collaborate with groups and individuals to develop new sports and physical activities for specific outcomes. The following are two examples from our range of target sports and physical activity programmes.

Horse Riding and Animal Welfare Project**Why:**

For some, sport and physical activity is about working with horses either recreationally, in a supporting career or competitively as a jockey. However, it can be challenging to identify a pathway for participation and development in this sport. In the National Stud participants learned about the breeding of horses and the training courses available.

What and Who:

An 8-week (2 hours 1 evening a week), Horse Riding and Animal Welfare course for children aged 12-17 years from disadvantaged backgrounds in Mosstown Equestrian Centre.

How:

Participants were transported to and from the Equestrian Centre, where they took part in 1 hour of horse riding and 1 hour of animal welfare education. The programme also included a trip to the RACE Academy and the National Stud. RACE is an international centre of excellence of training for the horse racing industry.



Learning how to look after animals was also a central part of this programme, and in addition to the hour-long animal welfare training courses, the Donkey Sanctuary provided programme participants with training on the care and welfare of donkeys. Collaboration: This programme was led by Longford Sports Partnership with funding from the Department of Agriculture, Longford County Council and Longford Community Resources Limited. The programme was supported by Longford County Youth Service, Hungry Horse Outside and Mosstown Stables.

Kicking Off With English Language Skills (KOWELS)

Why:

It was apparent that english language proficiency levels among some people from diverse migration backgrounds into county Longford was low.

What and Who:

The KOWELS project was developed to support the language skills development of migrants by pairing language lessons with participation in football/sport.



How:

There was an initial meeting between all stakeholders involved to identify the programme outcomes followed by a workshop meeting between the Tutor & Coach who were to deliver the programme, the Intercultural Co-coordinator implemented this with the FAI. Prior to the programme starting the LSP/FAI engaged with the group via a six week period of training sessions and then a friendly match in Roscommon with the Ballaghaderreen Centre, as part of European Week of Sport.

The KOWELS programme then provided 45 mins of English Language followed by 45 minutes of football training. The English language theory and practice was delivered by the ETB and the football practicals were delivered by the FAI and the Longford and District Schoolboy League. The classroom sessions are linked and reinforced by the coach at the football training.

8 participants have also completed their first coaching qualification the PDP1, this enables them to coach within their local community and engage with their local clubs. Also, two participants have joined their local Camlin United Football Club. It is anticipated that a similar mainstream programme will be extended to a wider audience in Longford Town, to support more comprehensive integration.

Collaboration:

Funding was sourced from the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), the programme included the active support of the Longford and Westmeath ETB and Third Age Ireland. Richmond Court Direct Provision Centre, Longford Schoolboy/girl League and the LSP.



Our Strategy for 2018 - 2022



Our Strategy for 2018 - 2022

LSP will encourage, support and promote sports and physical activity opportunities for everyone.

Our strategy is based on two equally important components.

	Participant	Partner
Our Vision:	You taking part!	An effective shared approach.
Our Mission:	Increase awareness, create opportunities and remove barriers to sports participation.	Manage Relationships, Collaborate, Support Quality and Sustainability.

We work closely with our partners to make sure that there are diverse, quality, inclusive and sustainable opportunities for participation. Our partners are:

- ❑ Sport makers: clubs, schools, communities, youth and commercial sector.
- ❑ Sports funders: Sport Ireland, Healthy Ireland, Longford County Council, the Education and Training Board, the HSE, 'An Garda Síochána, Longford Community Resources Clg, Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection.
- ❑ Public and Private Landowners: Waterways Ireland, Coillte, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Local Authorities, landowners.

Our Approach

LSP understands that to have a vibrant sport and physical activity culture where everyone takes part at his or her level, our partners and LSP must:

- ❑ have a shared **understanding**: about the diverse roles and opportunities which sport can bring to our social, health, community, economic and tourism settings.
- ❑ have clear **objectives**: sport performs different functions for different people and organisations. We partner with clubs, schools, communities and individuals to realise a range of objectives for sport.
- ❑ identify and secure the **resources** which are required for quality sports participation. Resources such as coaching and administration volunteers, knowledge, training opportunities and sports infrastructure.
- ❑ **collaborate**: none of us has all of the answers or resources, we need to be smart about how we co-operate so as to make best use of the available resources and to acquire new ones.
- ❑ focus on **quality**. Quality happens when we have well trained and supported coaches, trainers and administrators, when the activities are diverse, safe, enjoyable and challenging, when we all operate to good governance standards, and when we are inclusive, sport is for everyone, every age, every background, every ability and every culture.

Our Values

The following values provide touch-stones to guide what we do and how we do it:

- ❑ **Me Too:** sport is for every age, gender, ethnic group and ability. Our role is to support those who are actively engaged in sport and physical activity, those who are interested in becoming more engaged and to support the members of our community who are unsure or who have yet to find a meaningful link with sports and physical activity. We know that it can be challenging to engage with and deliver opportunities to everyone, however, creative thinking and willingness makes inclusion meaningful.
- ❑ **Sport Makers:** LSP recognises the powerful role and work of clubs, community groups and the commercial sector have in providing structured, quality and safe sport and physical activity experiences. LSP will continue to work with these 'sports makers' so that they can grow their resources and provide pathways for all of our participation.
- ❑ **Sport to you:** sport and physical activity no longer take place solely in specific venues such as halls and pitches or at particular times. Increasingly sport and physical activity happen in community streets, parks, forests, work-places and multiple other settings. LSP works across all settings so that sport and physical activity are nearby and we work in partnership with public and private landowners to support independent, self-directed activity.
- ❑ **Governance and Quality:** we all expect more, 'make-do' has been replaced with 'best practice'. Participants, volunteers, parents and carers rightly expect high quality, transparent and safe sports and physical activity environments.
- ❑ **Strong Culture:** the culture of sports and physical activity is always a work-in-progress. New issues, emerging challenges and opportunities provide all of us with the opportunity to develop the way we think about and live sports and physical activity.

Our Strategic Pillars

The following are the four strategic areas which include all of our key actions over the lifetime of the strategic plan.

1. ***Creating Opportunities:*** continuing to support the growth in the range of sports and physical activities which are available in the county through a culture of inclusion, diversity and collaboration for clubs, communities and amongst individuals.

These opportunities and culture will increase the attractiveness and the willingness to participate in sport and physical activity in our county.

2. ***Strengthening Resources:*** assisting clubs and other organisations to grow their capacity in sports infrastructure, volunteer recruitment and training and organisation knowledge.

Stronger resources provide better sports experiences and sustain participation amongst volunteers and participants.

3. ***Increasing Awareness:*** by LSP asking and listening, connecting opportunities with participants, working with thought leaders - especially in harder to reach groups - and creating meaningful messages which are well communicated. LSP will continue to promote the value and opportunity of sports and physical activity amongst partner organisations.

This communications element will result in more targeted and relevant sports and physical activity opportunities for the various types of participants and a greater awareness of the when, where and how individuals can participate.

4. ***The Structures of Sport:***

LSP:

- ☐ will operate within a context of national and local strategies, policies and trends;
- ☐ will continue to fulfil its internal business responsibilities regarding staff management, finance and operating procedures;
- ☐ will continue to develop, strengthen and manage its relationships with a variety of local, regional and national organisations and strategies.

The outcome from this will be an effective use of our resources and the collective resources for sport and physical activity in the county, to 'give and get the best from sport.

Pillar 1: Creating Opportunities

We believe that sports and physical activity are for every individual at all stages of the life-course, regardless of background or circumstance.

Outcome

A wide range of opportunities makes it more likely that sport and physical activity will be more relevant, attractive and meaningful in all stages of life, regardless of circumstances.

To deliver this outcome, the LSP's sports and physical activity programmes are applicable across a three-tier life-course model.

- ❑ Start Active: a culture of sports and physical activity amongst pre-school, national school and secondary school participants.
- ❑ Grow Active: opportunities for sports and physical activity amongst adolescent to middle age adults.
- ❑ Age Active: supporting the promise of sport amongst the retired and older adults.

The LSP will support everyone at these different life stages to make sports and physical activity a regular part of their lives. We will especially target those who face specific or significant challenges which makes their participation more difficult. The three action areas which are required to deliver this life-course approach are:

1. Diversity: building our repository of sports and physical activity programmes for various stages of the life course.
2. Cornerstones: deepen and sustain the role of sport with specific communities.
3. Mapping our presence: identifying the places and people where our programmes happen.

The following is an outline of the Longford Sports Partnership's actions to grow the range and number of opportunities for people to take part in sports in County Longford.



Action Area 1: Diversity

<i>No. Aim</i>	<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Responsible</i>
1.1 Identify the gaps.	An understanding of the gaps in current provision for sports and physical activity.	<p>A review of emerging sports and physical activity needs in the community across all of the life courses and target participants.</p> <p>Monitoring of the sports and physical activity and inclusion needs in the community through ongoing informal contacts and an online questionnaire within our network.</p> <p>An annual sports and physical activity priority needs target list.</p>	<p>Programme needs report.</p> <p>Annual sports Priority Programme needs development list.</p>	Sports Co-ordinator / LSP Staff
1.2 Develop our range of programmes.	Programmes which connect people to sport across all life-stages	<p>Develop a database of our existing sports and physical activity programmes.</p> <p>Respond to the programmes which need to be updated/amended or dropped.</p> <p>An annual search and review of emerging programmes.</p> <p>Plan and monitor inclusion opportunities for sports and physical activity.</p>	<p>Programme database.</p> <p>Programme Amend list.</p> <p>Annual outline of two new programme formats.</p> <p>Biennial Inclusion Strategy.</p> <p>90 programmes, targeting 2000 participants over the lifetime of the plan</p> <p>25 linked opportunities with communities across sectors, e.g. health, education tourism</p>	LSP

Action Area 2: Cornerstones.

<i>No. Aim</i>	<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Responsible</i>
<i>1.3 Signature Programmes and Sports.</i>	Specific priority programmes, sports and events.	<p>Identify a priority life-stage or target group, and funding initiatives.</p> <p>Deliver the most suitable sports/physical activities, programmes, and events for these priorities.</p>	Annual priority programmes, sports or event development plan.	LSP

Action Area 2: Cornerstones.

<i>1.4 Identify the cornerstone communities for sports and physical activity.</i>	A stronger community through sports and physical activity.	<p>Evaluate the current LSP Community Sports and Physical Activity Sports Hub in Edgeworthstown and the insights and critical success factors which have emerged from this process.</p> <p>Develop two other communities in County Longford which have the potential for future cross-community sports hub type approaches.</p> <p>Develop the programmes, partners and resources which are required to realise a future community-based programme.</p> <p>In partnership, develop a timetable for the community programme. Generate an example of best practice for Community Sports Development</p>	<p>Community sports hub evaluation.</p> <p>Community sports development priorities and timetable.</p> <p>2 community-led events annually</p> <p>External evaluation of project (e.g. regeneration, trails hub)</p>	LSP / Community Groups
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Action Area 3: Mapping

<i>1.5 Map our focus.</i>	Clarity regarding our actions across the county and community.	<p>Produce a map-based list of where our courses are located within the county and for which populations.</p> <p>Prioritise the LSP's geographic and population actions.</p>	LSP actions location map and review document.	LSP / LCC (GIS)
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Pillar 2: Strengthening Resources.

Participation in sports and physical activity is made more likely if there are meaningful settings and places where people can take part. These settings and places are in most cases provided by the following six types of organisations.

1. Sports clubs are at the core of sports and physical activity in Ireland and they provide the largest range and volume of sports programmes and facilities.
2. Communities have an increasing role in providing sports and physical activity opportunities in their community halls, pitches and within the broader community environment.

These clubs and community sports and physical activity initiatives are primarily developed and operated by a network of volunteer administrators and coaches.

3. Schools and pre-schools have a significant impact on sports and physical activity perceptions and participation among young people.
4. Youth organisations promote sports and physical activity as a means for social interaction and personal development
5. The commercial or 'for-profit' sector has an increasing role in the provision of sports and physical activity especially amongst young to middle-aged adults.
6. Agencies and landowners who provide settings for sports and physical activity such as Waterways Ireland, Coillte, NPWS, Local Authorities and private landowners.

There is a growth in self-structured groups who 'meet and train' and a growth in the use of the outdoors as venues for sports and physical activity. These groups of acquaintances and friends find a common purpose through sports, but they do not necessarily need formal club or community-based structures.

Outcome

Stronger resources will result in an increased capacity, better sports experiences and more sustained participation by volunteers and participants.

To realise this outcome the LSP will focus on the following two action areas:

- ☐ Maximising existing and advocating for new sports and physical activity infrastructure.
- ☐ Supporting the volunteer through training and education.

Our activities in these areas will emphasise:

- ☐ Collaboration: finding sustainable ways to share sports and physical activity infrastructure and competence so that we all benefit.
- ☐ Readiness: recognising that different groups and organisations are at a different stage of readiness and hence require different levels of support and resources.
- ☐ Quality and Governance: to be sustained, sport and physical activity must be meaningful, this requires high standards of provision as well as transparent and effective ways of working.
- ☐ Increasing capacity: through more providers and supporting organisations, growing competence and organisation awareness of best practice.

Action Area 1: Infrastructure

<i>No. Aim</i>	<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Responsible</i>
2.1 Facility Provision and Gaps.	Awareness of the existing and the required infrastructure resources.	Support opportunities for a sports and physical activity infrastructure audit via the NPAP ² , NSP and other resources.	Infrastructure Analysis Report.	LSP / Longford Tourism, Waterways Ireland, Longford County Council etc
		Support the identification of the existing sports and physical activity infrastructure in the County, through an internal analysis and an 'invitation for comment' to the sports network.	1 x infrastructure directory produced	
		Determine the infrastructure limitations regarding provision, availability and accessibility ³ .	Policy for Outdoor Recreation produced	
		Prioritise infrastructure development and collaboration needs with an additional focus on developing the outdoors as a means of sport and recreation	3 annual outdoor trails programmes	
			Trails developed in conjunction with key partners	
2.2 Maximising Existing Infrastructure	Optimum use of existing sports and physical activity infrastructure	Foster and support infrastructure collaboration opportunities based on the Infrastructure Analysis report and local sports programming needs.	Collaboration opportunity list.	LSP / Schools, Community Centres, ETBs etc
		Identify collaboration partners in sports clubs, community groups, schools/pre-schools and youth organisations.	1 x Infrastructure collaboration template/ case study and pilot.	
		In response to specific local needs, develop a relevant collaboration model and profile a supporting case study.	Collaboration pilot evaluation report	
		Initiate and evaluate the collaboration model.		

²NPAP refers to the National Physical Activity Plan and in particular the proposal within the NPAP framework to generate a database of sports and physical activity resources in the country.

³Provision relates to the physical presence of infrastructure, availability indicates the extent to which the infrastructure is fully utilised while accessibility refers to the extent to which the infrastructure is disability friendly, affordable and nearby.

Action Area 2: Volunteer Training and Education Supports

<i>No. Aim</i>	<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Responsible</i>
2.3 Supporting the Volunteer/Coach	Increased capacity of volunteers.	Review the range of volunteer support programmes relevant to sports clubs, community groups and youth organisations and their delivery timetable. Annual network consultation regarding training and education needs, including any 'Sports Conference' opportunities. Identify and prioritise the training and education gaps and the appropriate responses. Publish online a six-month training and education timetable.	Training and Education review. Twice annual training and education timetable. 1 x database of 20 tutors/contractors produced 60 education and training courses targeting 720 volunteers and coaches over the lifetimes	LSP
2.4 Encourage the champions	More individuals and organisations who are championing sports and physical activity.	Identify the geographic areas and the sports clubs, community groups, schools/pre-school and youth organisations which will benefit from leadership growth. Structure, promote and evaluate a 'Championing Sports' initiative for volunteer or organisation development.	Sports and physical activity geographic development priorities. 1 x championing Initiative and evaluation.	LSP / LSP Board
2.5 Supporting not-for-profit organisations	Increased capacity amongst not for profit sports and physical activity organisations.	In response to the changing demands, governance requirements and the expectations for voluntary sports and physical activity providers, produce a range of LSP's supports ⁴ . Utilise appropriate supports from other organisations such as NGBs and The Wheel. Amend and update these resources as required.	Updated LSP organisation support resources, including volunteer and coach policy	LSP
2.6 Support the for-profit organisations.	Increased engagement and capacity of the for-profit sports and physical activity organisations.	Review the role of the for-profit sports sector to support sustained participation in sports and physical activity. Identify the priority opportunities and the process for the role of the for-profit sector. Roll out and evaluate a pilot 'for-profit' sports participation support process.	Not for profit organisation's role review. For profit template, 1 x pilot and review report. Updated LSP organisation support resources.	

⁴For example club development and volunteer training guidelines.

Pillar 3: Increasing Awareness

There are different levels of awareness required so that sports and physical activity can play a full role in County Longford. Some people only need signposting to the available sports and physical activity opportunities for them to participate, others need an occasional nudge if they are to take part and sustain their involvement. There are also a significant number of people who do not perceive a need or a role for sport in their lives.

The LSP has to continually update its awareness so that it can understand and then respond to the different and evolving needs of the individuals, groups and communities in County Longford.

A variety of agencies and organisations benefit from the effects of sports and physical activities in health, education, social interaction and more. There needs to be an ongoing and informed conversation with these groups if they are to realise the potential and provide the resources and supports which sustain sports and physical activities.

LSP will continue to support our community's engagement in sports and physical activities, by listening to the needs, signposting the opportunities and by shaping the message of sport so that the value of these activities can be appreciated by everyone.

Outcome

Greater awareness will result in more targeted and relevant sports and physical activity opportunities and more information available regarding the when, where and how individuals can participate in sports and physical activities in County Longford.

To achieve this the LSP must listen and respond to the participants, potential participants and the reluctant participants in sports and physical activity. We will equally listen and respond to the various organisations with 'common ground' so that we can promote and resource the promise of sport.

To realise this outcome the LSP will focus on the following three action areas:

- ☐ Continue to manage and evolve our communications channels so that they support two-way communications with our participants and partners.
- ☐ Strengthen Relationships: We will continue to engage with and strengthen our relationships with partners and organisations who have a shared interest in the development of sports and physical activity.
- ☐ Measure the positive impact of sports and physical activities.

Action Area 1 : Manage and Evolve our Communications

No. Aim	Outcome	Actions	Indicator	Responsible
3.1 Communications Resources	Effective structures/ channels for communicating with the County Longford community and our partner organisations.	Identify an appropriate communications benchmark organisation(s) and their approach. Evaluate the use and effectiveness of LSP social and traditional media by the LSP, through reference to metrics, user communications preferences, our content etc. Develop the structure and content of our website from the perspective of our participants and partners. Undertake an external online communications review amongst users. Generate a communications plan which includes structural and ongoing actions regarding our communications channels and our content Source the resources required to realise the communications plan. Collect and disseminate information to relevant stakeholders through an appropriate mix of communication methods	Feedback & review of the LSP communications channels and content. Communications plan. Data collection and use policy Data management systems in place	LSP / LSP Board

Action Area 2: Strengthen Relationships

<i>No. Aim</i>	<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Responsible</i>
3.2 Clarify the relationships.	Enhanced relationships and actions between the LSP and our key partners.	Analyse our current organisation relationships, communications, strengths and deficits. Implement a relationship management approach and the supporting communication structures and content which are required.	Partner relationships matrix. Relationship management plan and responsibilities and collaborative focus Min. 3 formal agreements in place with partners and 10 additional community arrangements Min. 2 NGB initiatives/collaborations per year and 12 linked opportunities over the lifetime of strategy	LSP / LSP Board / Partner agencies / NGBs

Action Area 3: Measure.

3.3 Measure the positive impact	Clear messages regarding the impact of sports and physical activity.	Review our current programme evaluation methods and means of analysis. Support the use of a small number of appropriate templates which capture and explain the value of sports and physical activity. Secure the resources required and the timetable for a pilot evaluation. Initiate and review the pilot evaluation approach.	Evaluation and template report. Pilot evaluation process. Undertake and distribute 1 case-study per annum.	
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Pillar 4: Structures of Sport

Sport and physical activity fulfil many roles:

- ☐ Sport supports and creates communities.
- ☐ Sport engages, it provides a common and neutral meeting ground with no boundaries for individuals, communities, target groups and so on.
- ☐ Sport encourages interaction, within and between communities and amongst individuals.
- ☐ Sport has a function, it enhances physical and mental health and supports the quality of living throughout the life course.
- ☐ Sport is a business: commercial provision, careers, equipment sales and sports tourism are part of the economy.
- ☐ Sport is a setting: parks, walkways, pitches, forests, homes, hills, schools, lakes and workplaces are all settings in which sport takes place and which are part of our everyday landscape.

Strategic Context

Sport in County Longford takes place within the context of our local needs and national policy. The Longford County Development Plan 2015 – 2020, the County Longford Local Development Strategy, the County Longford Local Economic and Community Plan 2016 - 2022 and the 'Longford - County Healthy Ireland Plan 2018-2022, identify local needs while the Sport Ireland Statement of Strategy, DTTAS National Sports Policy 2018-2027 and Get Ireland Active, the National Physical Activity Plan are central to shaping and supporting sports and physical activity nationally.

Outcomes

The outcome from this will be an effective use of our LSP resources and of the collective resources for sport in the county, so as to 'give and get the best from sport' in County Longford. Our action areas to realise these outcomes are:

- ☐ Manage the agendas: LSP will continue to balance the local and the national priorities for sports and physical activity.
- ☐ Manage our resources: LSP will continue to source and manage our resources and expertise in a structured open and effective manner.

Action Area 1: Manage the Agendas

<i>No. Aim</i>	<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Responsible</i>
4.1 Balance the local and national sports and physical activity agendas.	Sports and physical activity services and supports which are meaningful and effective at a local level.	<p>Identify the key needs which have emerged from our engagement in the sector and our evaluation and reporting process⁵.</p> <p>Resource these needs from local and national funding strategies and any resourcing gaps.</p> <p>Prioritise national funding opportunities which meet local needs.</p> <p>Drive any local, regional and national lobbying requirements to resolve local needs.</p> <p>Lead and advocate with regard to shaping the culture of sports and physical activity in the county.</p>	<p>Programme and resourcing matrix.</p> <p>Annual funding and lobbying priorities list.</p> <p>LLSP leadership role and sports culture statement.</p>	LSP / LSP Board / LCC

⁵Including the LSP Priority Programme (1.1), Event Development (1.3), Community Sports Development Priorities (1.4), Infrastructure Analysis Report and Inclusion Strategy

Action Area 2: Manage our resources contd.

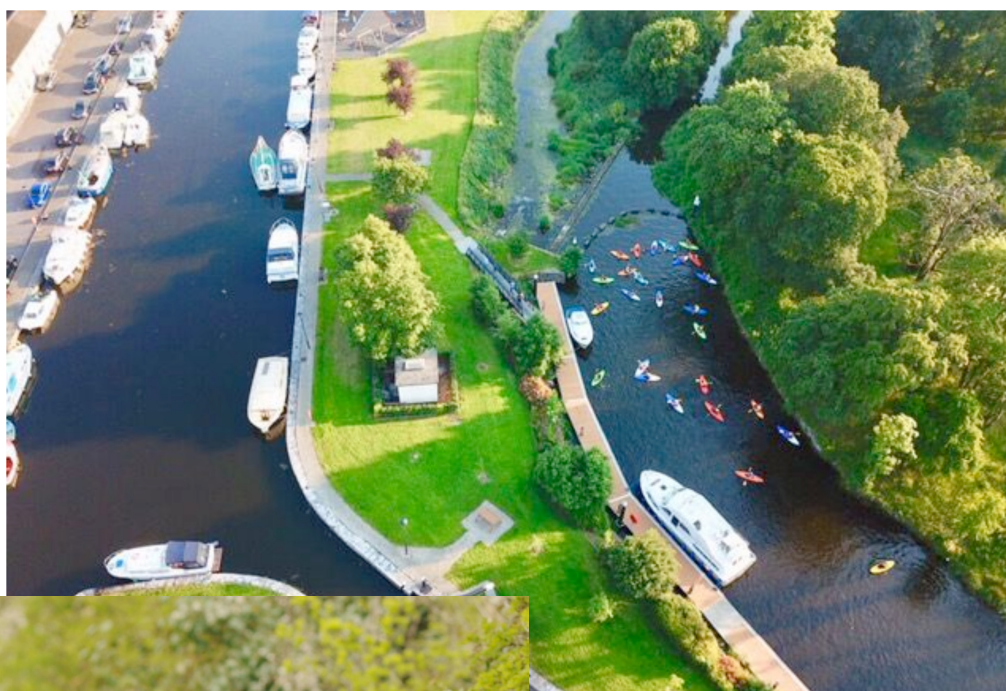
4.2 Staff Development and Care.	Optimum staff expectations and supports.	Identify the staff and expertise status and needs of LSP.	Annual staff review and training needs report.	Sports Co-ordinator and LSP staff
		Continue to monitor and update our staff responsibilities, training needs and workload.	Updated Operating Procedures.	
		Communicate the changing strategic and operational responsibilities of the LSP staff.	Biannual staff strategy meetings and monthly check-ins	
		Publish a graphic of our actions and impacts for the previous year.		
4.3 Board Development and Care.	Optimum Board expectations and supports.	Review our substructures, committees and co-opted members.	Annual 'Structures and Board' report.	LSP / LSP Board
		Apply appropriate evaluation metrics for the Board.	Renew membership every three years	
		Clarify the LSP Board's strategic, ambassador and communications responsibilities.	Board induction process complete	
		Procure board member expertise and needs.	Board succession planning conducted	
		Update our Board member expectations, responsibilities and training needs.		
4.4 Operations and Transparency.	Optimum ways of working and structures.	Update our Operating Procedures every two years.	Annual accounts	LSP
		Adhere to appropriate and transparent governance, financial and accounting procedures.	Annual report to Sport Ireland Annual Impact Graphic	
		Complete our end of year reporting procedures.	Annual grant application to Sport Ireland and min. 2 partners	

Conclusion

Building on our previous plans, the staff and Board of Longford Sports Partnership firmly believe that this strategy will support individuals and communities to maintain or become more active by providing More Opportunities, More Engagement and More Awareness of physical activity.

Our dual approach of 'Participant and Partnership' will ensure collaborative relationships with all stakeholders ensuring quality, sustainable and effective approaches are used so all people can be more active regardless of age, gender, ethnicity or ability.

Whether you are a participant or a facilitator, it's 'You Taking part' that will help us collectively shape an active, happy, healthy Longford.





Longford Sports Partnership Strategy 2018-2022