



Louth Local Sports and Physical Activity Plan 2026 - 2031



Comhairle Contae Lú
Louth County Council

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Foreword:

David Conway, Chief Executive, Louth County Council

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the Louth Local Sports and Physical Activity Plan 2026-2031, a strategic framework that is firmly grounded in national policy, aligning with the Government's health and wellbeing priorities, and Sport Ireland's vision for a more active Ireland.

Building on this national direction, the plan also strongly reflects and reinforces the ambitions set out in the Louth County Council Corporate Plan 2024–2029, ensuring clear coherence between national priorities and our local commitment to creating a healthier, more inclusive and more connected County Louth.

Sport and physical activity are central to the type of county we want to shape - one that is vibrant, welcoming and resilient. They contribute to better health, stronger communities, enhanced social inclusion and thriving public spaces.

As our population grows and diversifies, delivering accessible and high-quality opportunities for people of all ages and abilities becomes even more important. This plan sets out a clear and coordinated direction to achieve that.

Its development has been informed by extensive engagement with residents, clubs, schools, community groups and partner organisations across Louth. More than 500 people took part, helping to shape a plan that reflects local needs while supporting the Corporate Plan's emphasis on collaboration, partnership and meaningful community input.

At the heart of this plan is our shared ambition for 'a County Louth where everyone is included, inspired and supported to be active throughout their lives.'

To deliver on this ambition, the plan is built around three core pillars that complement the Corporate Plan's themes of inclusion, sustainability and placemaking:

- **Active People & Communities** – supporting clubs, empowering individuals and removing barriers so more people can participate.
- **Active Spaces & Places** – providing high-quality facilities and maximising the value of our natural and built environments.
- **Active Communications & Partnerships** – strengthening collaboration, visibility and shared responsibility across sectors.

I would like to acknowledge the leadership and dedication of the Louth Local Sports Partnership, whose work exemplifies the Corporate Plan's values of innovation, equality, inclusiveness and being citizen centric.

I also wish to thank the many volunteers, schools, clubs, community organisations and statutory partners who continue to enhance sporting and recreational life throughout the county.

Delivering on this plan will require ongoing partnership, investment and a strong commitment to inclusion and sustainability.

By working collaboratively with our staff, elected members, partners and communities, I am confident that we can build a more active, healthy and connected County Louth - one where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

David Conway
Chief Executive
Louth County Council

Foreword:

Cllr. Dolores Minogue, Cathaoirleach, Louth County Council

It is with great pride that I welcome the Louth Local Sports and Physical Activity Plan 2026-2031, a shared vision that reflects our commitment to building a healthier, more active and more inclusive County Louth.

Sport and physical activity are powerful forces for positive change. They bring people together, strengthen communities, improve physical and mental wellbeing, and create opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to participate, connect and thrive. Across County Louth, we are fortunate to have a strong tradition of sporting achievement, vibrant clubs, dedicated volunteers, and exceptional natural assets that support active lifestyles.

This plan has been shaped through extensive consultation with residents, community groups, clubs, schools, young people and partner organisations across the county. The message from these consultations was clear: people value sport and physical activity and want greater opportunities to be active in their communities. The enthusiasm, ambition and commitment

demonstrated throughout this process have helped create a plan that truly reflects the needs and aspirations of our county.

Our vision is simple but ambitious: a County Louth where everyone is included, supported and inspired to be active throughout life. Achieving this vision will require collaboration across many sectors and the continued dedication of communities, volunteers, sporting organisations, public bodies and local leaders working together.

The plan's three strategic themes, Active People and Communities, Active Spaces and Places, and Active Communications and Partnerships, provide a clear framework for action over the coming years. They recognise that increasing participation is about more than sport alone. It is about creating welcoming places, removing barriers, supporting inclusion, investing in facilities, and ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of being active.

As Cathaoirleach, I want to acknowledge the outstanding work of Louth Local Sports Partnership, Louth County Council staff, our elected members, and all those who contributed their time, expertise and passion to the development of this plan. I also wish to pay tribute to the countless volunteers who are the backbone of sport and physical activity throughout County Louth. Their dedication helps create opportunities that enrich lives every day.

I am confident that, through continued partnership and shared commitment, we can deliver on the ambitions set out in this plan and create a county where more people are active, healthier, better connected and empowered to reach their full potential.

Together, let us build a stronger, healthier and more active County Louth for this generation and those to come.

Cllr. Dolores Minogue

**Cathaoirleach
Louth County Council**

Introduction

County Louth holds a unique and enviable position within Ireland's sporting landscape. Strategically located along the M1 corridor between Dublin and Belfast, the county benefits from proximity to two major cities while maintaining its own strong identity and community cohesion. This connectivity creates opportunities to attract new participants, respond to emerging sporting trends and engage border populations who move between regions for work, education, and leisure.

As Ireland's smallest county, rich in spirit, ambition and community strength, Louth offers an extraordinary diversity of natural assets within a short distance from coastline and beaches to mountain landscapes, rivers and rolling countryside. Few counties can offer access to so many varied outdoor environments, all within easy reach of urban centres. This compact geography with well-connected arterial routes presents significant opportunities to promote sport and physical activity across communities.

Louth is home to two large and growing urban centres, Dundalk and Drogheda, which provide strong population bases for developing new opportunities for sport and physical activity. These towns, alongside the thriving market town of Ardee, together with expanding residential developments across the county, create momentum for increased participation and demand for accessible facilities. As urbanisation continues at pace, there is a timely opportunity to embed sport and physical activity infrastructure into new communities.

The county's deep-rooted club structures and proud traditions in field sports provide a solid foundation of volunteerism, identity, and community connection. At the same time, there is a growing interest in emerging and alternative sports, reflecting national trends and the influence of nearby metropolitan areas. This blend of heritage and innovation positions Louth uniquely - honouring its sporting traditions while embracing new opportunities.

Together, Louth's strategic location, compact and diverse landscape, strong urban hubs, growing population, and vibrant club culture create exceptional potential to enhance participation and build a dynamic, inclusive sporting future for communities across the county.

This plan sets out an inspiring and shared vision for sport and physical activity across the county, enhancing active lifestyles at every stage of life.

The plan seeks to support and encourage people of all ages and abilities to become more active, by expanding opportunity, choice, and access, by creating welcoming, inclusive environments, where individuals, families and communities can connect, thrive and enjoy the lifelong benefits of being active across County Louth.

We recognise the wide-ranging and lasting benefits of regular participation in sport and physical activity, including improved physical and mental wellbeing, stronger social connections, positive contributions to the local economy, support for climate action objectives, and long-term community regeneration. These outcomes align closely with the Council's Corporate Plan – the corporate goals are to strengthen our communities through empowerment and inclusion and promoting sustainability.

A cornerstone of this strategy is the ongoing leadership of Louth Local Sports Partnership, which has been instrumental in promoting sport and physical activity across the county. Supported by Sport Ireland, the partnership continues to play a vital role in delivering innovative initiatives, providing needs-based opportunities, enhancing accessibility, and fostering inclusivity. Its expertise and dedication remain essential to the successful implementation of this plan. Equally important is the commitment of all council departments to this whole council approach. Collaboration across planning, housing, climate action, active travel, community development, and other partners is essential to achieving the goals of the strategy. Adopting a council-wide approach, this plan is to be considered alongside our County Development Plan (2027-2033), our Local Economic and Community Plan and relevant Council policies. Together, we are working to ensure that sport and physical activity become integral to the daily lives of people in Louth, supported by enhanced infrastructure, targeted initiatives, and effective communication.

This plan demonstrates our **'collaborative approach'** and commitment to Action 8 of the National Sports Policy:



Physical activity comes in all forms to fit around busy lifestyles, whether this is walking, cycling, gym workouts, gardening, children playing outside, families spending time together in Louth's great outdoors. Participation varies for everyone, whether it is being a part of a club or being involved in competitive sports.

The main focus of this plan is to increase participation in sports and all types of physical activity while taking into consideration infrastructure and facility provision. Our ambitions for sport and physical activity are structured around three strategic themes and supported by 48 actions, providing a practical and deliverable roadmap, shared vision to provide a clear pathway towards lasting change achieving healthier communities and lifestyles.

Definition of Sport

Sport plays a vital role in enhancing physical health, mental wellbeing, and social connection within communities. It encompasses a wide range of activities that cater to individuals of all ages, abilities, and interests, whether pursued for enjoyment, personal development, or competitive achievement. In recognising the broad and inclusive nature of sport, the following definition, abridged from Sport Ireland, outlines the scope of sporting activity and its contribution to individual and societal wellbeing.

“Sport means all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental wellbeing, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels.”

Sport includes both competitive sport and recreational sport. Recreational sport is defined as all forms of physical activity through regular or casual participation aiming to improve fitness/mental well-being and forming social relationships.

Local Sports Plan at-a-glance

Our Vision

A County Louth where everyone is included, supported, and inspired to be active throughout life.

Our Mission

'To inspire and enable healthy, active and connected communities across County Louth through collaboration, increased participation and inclusive sport and physical activity opportunities for all'

Strategic Themes



Values – aligned with Council's Corporate Values

1. Collaboration & Partnership	4. Innovation
2. Equality of Access/Equity/Inclusion	5. Empowerment
3. Sustainability	6. Evidence

Guiding Principles

Collaboration & Partnership We will work together across communities, organisations, agencies, clubs, schools and services to create a coordinated and united approach to sport and physical activity across the county.	Empowerment We will support, encourage and inspire every person in County Louth to take ownership of their active journey to unlock their potential.
Inclusivity & Equity We will create inclusive and accessible sport and physical activity opportunities for everyone in County Louth.	Innovation We will encourage creativity, new ideas and flexible approaches to sport and physical activity, supporting emerging sports, new delivery models and innovative use of spaces and technology to meet evolving community needs.
Sustainability and Long-Term Impact We will plan and deliver sustainable, long-term solutions that build capacity, protect the environment and leave a lasting active legacy for future generations.	Evidence We will have a <u>joined up</u> approach to promote physical activity and sport, maximising the use of data and evidence to inform decision making, share good practice and communicate with impact.

LCC Corporate Values



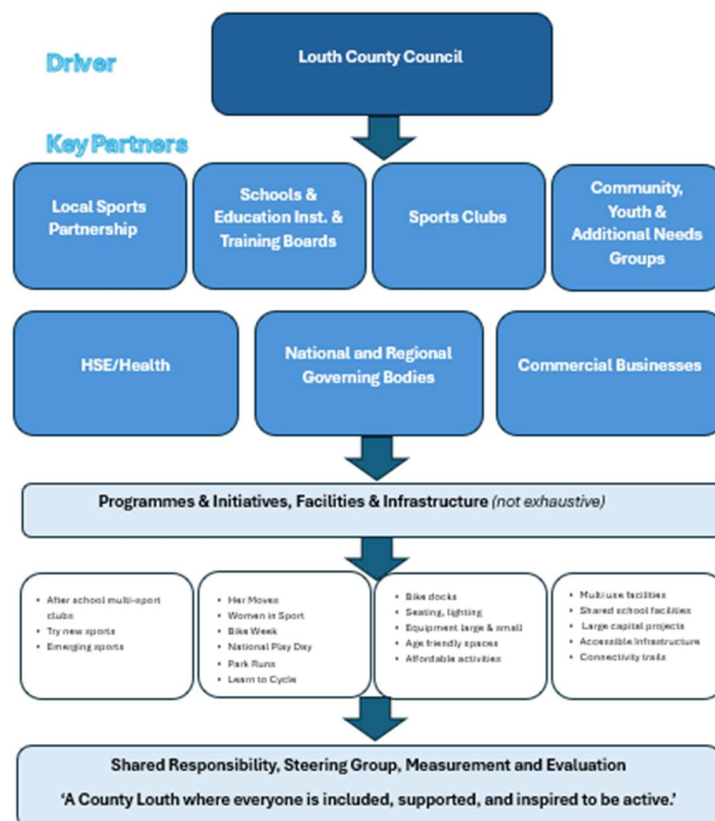
Our Local Sports and Activity Plan 2026 - 2031

This County Local Sports Plan illustrates how sport and physical activity will be planned, supported, and delivered across County Louth through a coordinated, partnership-led approach. It recognises that creating opportunities for people to be active requires shared responsibility, collective leadership, and collaboration across sectors.

Louth County Council provides strategic leadership and acts as the key driver, working closely with a wide range of partners including the Local Sports Partnership, schools and education and training boards, sports clubs, community and voluntary organisations, health services, national and regional governing bodies, and the commercial sector. Each partner plays a vital role in contributing expertise, resources, facilities, and local knowledge.

Together, these partners support the development and delivery of programmes and initiatives, alongside the planning, provision, and enhancement of facilities and infrastructure. These activities are not exhaustive and will continue to evolve in response to community needs, emerging opportunities, and changing participation trends.

The plan is underpinned by shared responsibility, coordinated governance, and a commitment to monitoring, measurement, and evaluation. This ensures accountability, continuous improvement, and alignment with the overarching ambition being the county which aims to provide: A County Louth where everyone is included, supported, and inspired to be active throughout life. (See Figure Below).



Our Commitments – Guiding Principles & Values

Commitments and values are important in the the development of the Louth Local Sports Plan, these provide a clear foundation for how the plan will be delivered. They set out the principles that guide decision-making, ensure actions investment and partnerships are consistent and are aligned with the needs of the county. These commitments are designed to establish a sense of shared-ownership and how we intend to work together.

This Local Sports Plan is grounded in the Council's Corporate Values of being **Democratic, Citizen-Centric, Innovative, governed with integrity, Sustainable** and Committed to **Equality**. These principles shape not only what we aim to achieve, but how we will deliver for communities across the county.

Through **Collaboration and Partnership**, we reflect our **democratic** and **citizen-focused** approach, working transparently with communities, clubs, schools, agencies and stakeholders to ensure shared ownership and collective impact. Our commitment to **Inclusivity and Equity** directly supports the Council's **equality** mandate, ensuring that every person, regardless of background, ability or circumstance, has fair access to sport and physical activity opportunities.

Sustainability underpins our long-term thinking, guiding responsible investment in facilities, programmes and climate-conscious development to benefit current and future generations. Innovation drives our willingness to embrace new ideas, emerging trends and creative solutions to respond to evolving community needs. Finally, our commitment to being **Evidence-Led** reflects strong **governance**, ensuring that decisions are informed by data, consultation and measurable outcomes.

Together, these values ensure that this Local Sports Plan not only aligns with the Council's Corporate framework, but actively translates those principles into practical, community-focused action that strengthens participation, wellbeing and opportunity across the county.



We will aim to be:

Collaborative: Support people in County Louth to be more active, more often is a shared responsibility. We will work collaboratively across the local authority together with external partners to increase participation in sport and physical activity.

Inclusive: Aim for every person in Louth, regardless of their background, ability or circumstances will have a fair and equal opportunity to lead an active lifestyle in sport and physical activity

Sustainable: Take a long-term approach to sport and physical activity by aligning resources with need and embedding climate action and environmental responsibility in how opportunities are planned and delivered.

Innovative: Demonstrate a creative and forward-thinking approach to developing programmes, initiatives, events, and places that inspire and support people across County Louth to be active

Empowering: Support communities that play a crucial role in the development and delivery of sport and physical activity; through strong leadership and skills development to help people shape their sport and physical activity opportunities in their areas

Informed: Commit to evidence-based planning, using data and research to guide and support decision-making to deliver targeted, effective sport and physical activity opportunities.

Setting the plan in Context

This Local Sports Plan is informed by Government, National, Regional, Local Policy, as well as extensive consultation gathering a clear understanding of community needs. These policies can be further expanded in Appendix 1. The positive impact of regular sport and physical activity participation is far reaching, cross cutting and prioritised across these policies and in brief is summarised below:

Governmental Policy Alignment



Community



People



Togetherness

Louth Get Active Day Out

The Teenage Girls Get Active August Day Out in County Louth is a vibrant and empowering initiative, designed to encourage young women to reconnect with sport and physical activity in a fun, supportive environment. Held during the summer, the event brings teenage girls together from across the county to take part in a variety of activities, from team sports and fitness sessions to more relaxed, social forms of movement. The focus is firmly on enjoyment, confidence and creating a positive first experience, or re-engaging those who may have drifted away from sport.

The impact of the day goes far beyond physical activity. Many teenage girls drop out of sport during adolescence due to confidence challenges, social pressures or not feeling included. This initiative helps break down those barriers by providing a welcoming, judgment-free space where girls can simply enjoy being active. It builds friendships, strengthens self-belief, and promotes visible pathways for women in sport within Louth. Most importantly, it sends a clear message that sport belongs to young women too, and their participation truly matters.



Photo: Teenage Girls Get Active August Day out in Louth

Key Louth Strategies Louth County Council Strategies and Policies



The Louth Local Sports Plan aligns with the **Louth County Council Climate Action Plan 2024–2029** through a shared commitment to sustainability and healthier lifestyles. This will be achieved by promoting increased participation in sport, physical activity, and active travel. The Local Sports Plan supports the transition to a low-carbon county and helps reduce reliance on car travel. The Plan encourages walking, cycling, and outdoor recreation, contributing to lower greenhouse gas emissions and improved air quality. Together, both plans support a healthier population and a more environmentally sustainable County Louth.

The **Carlingford Greenway** supports the objectives of the Louth Local Sports Plan by providing accessible infrastructure for walking, cycling, and outdoor recreation. It encourages active travel and informal physical activity, helping to increase participation among people of all ages and abilities, across County Louth.



The new **Louth County Development Plan 2027–2033** will support the objectives of the Louth Local Sports Plan through its focus on sustainable growth and quality of life within the community. By prioritising active travel, and accessible community infrastructure, the Development Plan will help create environments that encourage sport and physical activity. This alignment supports increased participation, improved access to facilities, and healthier, more active towns across all of County Louth.

The '**National Sports Policy, 2018 to 2027**' set out 57 Actions to be delivered over a 10 year period to develop Sport and Physical Activity in Ireland.

Within the 'Participation Chapter, under Action 8, the policy recognises the pivotal role that Local Authorities play in increasing participation locally, and each Local Authority was asked to develop a Local Sports Plan for their County to increase participation locally.

The Local Authority will work with the **Local Sports Partnership**, and all local stakeholders, including schools, CYPSC, community groups and clubs, leisure centres and facility providers to produce a Sports Plan, for the County, that is a locally led, nationally supported approach which is a key feature of the participation strategy.

Our County Development Plan 2027-2033

The Louth County Development Plan (in progress) provides the overarching framework for managing growth, housing, economic development, and environmental protection across the county. It promotes sustainable development by addressing physical, social, economic, and environmental needs while safeguarding Louth’s distinctive natural, built, and valued amenities. It places strong emphasis on creating high-quality environmentally friendly living environments; improving personal health and wellbeing for residents and visitors, recognising the vital role that sport, physical activity, and recreation play throughout all stages of life. The plan is underpinned by five overarching themes Outdoor Access; Community & Health facilities; Healthy Placemaking; LECP Alignment.

The provision of accessible social, recreational, and cultural amenities is a key priority within Louth. These objectives align with the Local Sports Plan through a shared goal of supporting the provision of high quality and accessible sporting facilities, improving the lives of residents and visitors to the county in recognition of the contribution of all forms of sport and recreation to improve quality of life, personal health, and wellbeing.

This aligns closely with the Local Sports Plan through a shared focus on improving access to quality sporting, physical activity, and recreational infrastructure. This focuses on identifying participation needs across the county; targeting recreation and participatory sport for all social backgrounds and ages; Promoting Inclusive Participation, alignment with Health Policies, Supporting Clubs and Communities to respond to sports development opportunities and finally Land Use and Infrastructure Protection (zoning, expansion, asset loss, social infrastructure).



Five Relevant County Louth Development Plan Strategic Pillars

Strategic Objective SO7 (Natural Heritage, Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure):

Aims to protect heritage assets while improving access to the countryside through the development of greenways, walking trails, and blue ways to support sustainable communities.

Strategic Objective SO8 (Community & Health Facilities):

Focuses on developing vibrant, inclusive, and healthy communities by ensuring access to a wide range of community, health, and educational facilities suitable for all ages and needs.

Strategic Objective SO9 (Healthy Placemaking):

Seeks to improve wellbeing through 'Healthy Placemaking,' which involves creating vibrant, safe, and accessible public spaces that promote positive social interaction.

Strategic Objective SO10 (Infrastructure and Public Utilities):

Supports the implementation of the Louth Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP). This is relevant because the LECP includes specific goals for 'Health and Wellbeing' and 'Nurturing Children and Young People.'

Strategic Objective SO15 (Sustainable Connectivity):

Focus on the integration of land use planning and transport to increase the use of sustainable transport modes, ensuring sports and community facilities are accessible via walking and cycling networks.

Louth Local Economic and Community Plan 2024-2029

The LECP sets out the framework, objectives, and actions to promote Louth's economic and local/community development over a six-year period. The plan includes five high-level goals, with the first— to work with all communities to help them reach their full economic and social potential; to develop entrepreneurship and the economic opportunities afforded by the County's strategic location; to foster healthy, inclusive, diverse and creative and resilient neighbourhoods; to actively lead on the county's climate resilience, sustainability and biodiversity and will have engaged, empowered, dynamic, resourced and connected communities. The ambition for Louth is to create accessible economic opportunities which permit its inhabitants to thrive in a vibrant, welcoming community. The LECP aligns to increase the rate of participation in physical activity. This aligns with the Local Sports Plan three strategic themes and values. The LECP is a collaborative approach representing community and economic elements and the needs of its citizens.

Woman in Sport - Case Study

Teenage Girls Get Active in Sport

Louth LSP delivered two Teenage Girls Get Active in the Outdoor Leadership programmes during Sport Ireland's HER Outdoors Week in August 2025. The main aim of these programmes was to engage teenage girls from Louth aged 13–17 in outdoor activities, while designing and delivering a leadership programme involving water- and land-based activities in partnership with Carlingford Adventure Centre. The programme also sought to celebrate and encourage young female participants to explore and enjoy the range of activities available within Louth, particularly in the Carlingford region. Louth LSP worked closely with senior staff and instructors at Carlingford Adventure Centre to design, deliver and evaluate the programme.

Parental Quote

'My girls had a great experience. They were exposed to all kinds of wonderful outdoor adventures. They made great friendships and learned valuable experiences.'



Case Study - Louth Disability Cycling Club

In 2024, Louth Local Sports Partnership collaborated with the local community to establish the Louth Disability Cycling Club, led by committed local volunteers. The club provides inclusive cycling opportunities for children and adults with physical, sensory, and intellectual disabilities, supported by adaptive bikes, trikes, and tailored coaching programmes. The club now operates a fleet of eight accessible bikes and trikes that are used on a weekly basis across the county. Through regular participation, members have improved physical fitness, motor skills, confidence, and overall wellbeing, while the initiative has also increased awareness of inclusive sport and physical activity within County Louth.



Parental Quote

"Joining the Louth Disability Cycling Club has been amazing for my child. It has given them confidence, independence, and the chance to try something new."



About Louth County

- County Louth is located in the province of Leinster, in the east of Ireland, and lies within the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly area.
- County Louth is bordered by County Armagh to the north, County Monaghan to the west, County Meath to the south, and the Irish Sea to the east.
- County Louth spans an area of approximately 826 km² and comprises 6 local electoral areas: Ardee; Drogheda Urban; Drogheda Rural; Dundalk North; Dundalk South; and Drogheda.



The People

139,703

**Louth Population
(2022, Census)**

2.71%

**% Of The Population of
Ireland Live in Louth**

151,500

**Projected Population
of Louth in 2031**

69.7%

**Population Of Louth
Living in Urban Areas**

30.3%

**Population Of Louth
Living in Rural Areas**

49.3%/50.7%

**Male & Female
population respectively**

Key Insights About Louth County Council Area



County Louth has a young and growing population.

County Louth recorded a population of 139,703 (Census 2022), representing growth of +10.9% since 2016, well above the national average. The average age is approximately 38.2 years, with a strong share of residents being of working/family-forming age, mainly driven by inward migration from employment opportunities along the Dublin–Belfast corridor. County Louth represents a uniqueness in the fact that it has two large urban areas where most of the county's population is concentrated at various locations within the county (Drogheda & Dundalk).



Deprivation is concentrated in specific urban pockets.

County Louth performs on the Pobal HP Deprivation Index with an overall score of approximately –3.59. Parts of Drogheda and Dundalk contain multiple small areas categorised as disadvantaged/very disadvantaged, highlighting persistent socio-economic inequalities within the county despite strong population growth and economic activity overall.



Louth demonstrates strong labour force participation.

County Louth benefits from high labour force participation and employment levels, supported by strong commuter links to Dublin and Belfast. The county's employment base is anchored by Drogheda and Dundalk, with growth across services, manufacturing, logistics, and cross-border activity. Employment trends reflect a stable and growing economy.



Educational attainment continues to improve.

Education in County Louth has strengthened in recent years, with a growing proportion of residents holding third-level qualifications. Access to higher education institutions within and near the county supports skills development and contributes to a more knowledgeable and skilled local labour force.



County Louth is increasingly diverse and multicultural.

County Louth has experienced a notable increase in diversity, with over 10% of residents holding a nationality other than Irish. The largest non-Irish populations originate from other EU countries as expected. This demographic change has contributed to a diverse population growth, increased labour supply, and cultural diversity, particularly in the county's main urban areas.



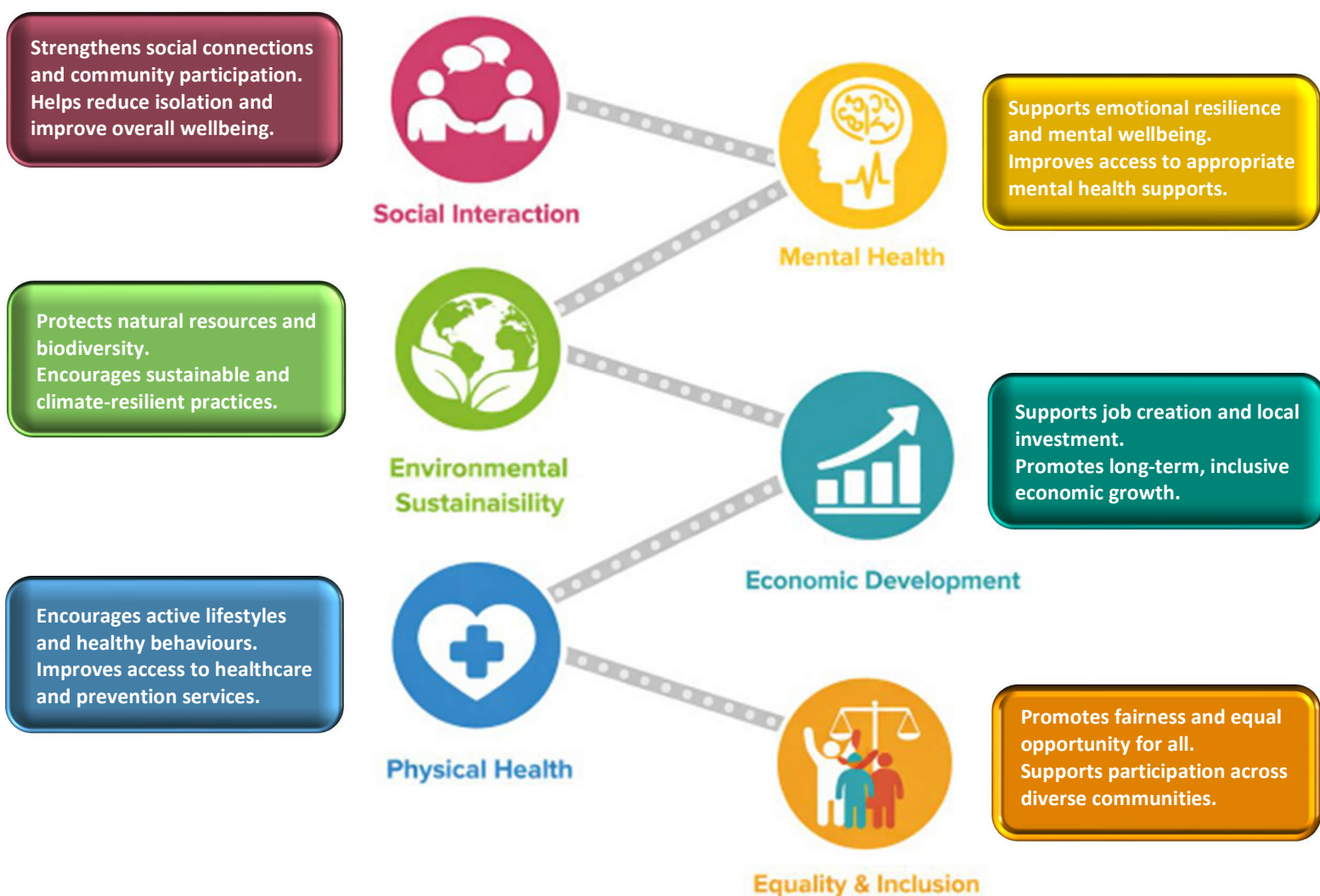
Louth is one of the State's fastest growing counties.

In the RSES, Drogheda and Dundalk are designated as two of the region's three Regional Growth Centres, each targeted to reach a population of up to 50,000 by 2031. In 2022, Dundalk had a population of 43,112 and Drogheda 44,135. County Louth had a population density of 169.1 people per square kilometre, more than double the national average, making it the second most density populated after Dublin, and the second most urbanised with 69.7% of residents living in urban areas. Continued growth to 2031 and beyond is expected to increase pressure on housing, transport, and public services while strengthening Louth's strategic regional role.

Why is our local sports plan important?

The cross cutting impact of sport and physical activity

Participation in sport and physical activity and recreation brings significant positive impact to people, communities, the environment which supports and drives the economy.



Sport and physical activity play a vital role in County Louth by strengthening social interaction, supporting mental and physical health, and promoting equality and inclusion through accessible community-based participation.

The Economic Impact of Sport and Physical Activity

In 2021, Sport Ireland asked the Sport Industry Research Centre (SIRC) at Sheffield Hallam University to look at the overall value of sport in Ireland. The study showed that taking part in sport and physical activity not only brings clear physical and mental health benefits, especially for those meeting the recommended 150 minutes per week but also plays a key role in supporting the Irish economy. For children and young people, the research recommended 60 minutes per day for primary and post primary ages. From volunteering and job creation to income generation and wider economic activity, sport makes a meaningful contribution to communities. Ensuring a diverse range of sports, properly funded, is crucial to sustaining participation. As healthier lifestyles becoming more prominent in the modern area, better food and increased exercise will be seen as the way forward.

- Participation in sport and physical activity prevents 100,000 cases of disease annually, generating savings to the Government of nearly €0.4bn
- Sport-related jobs accounted for 2.8% of all Irish employment in 2018.
- Sport volunteering in Ireland valued at €1.5bn
- Consumers spent €3.3bn on sports related goods and services in 2018.

Sport, Physical Activity & Sustainable Development

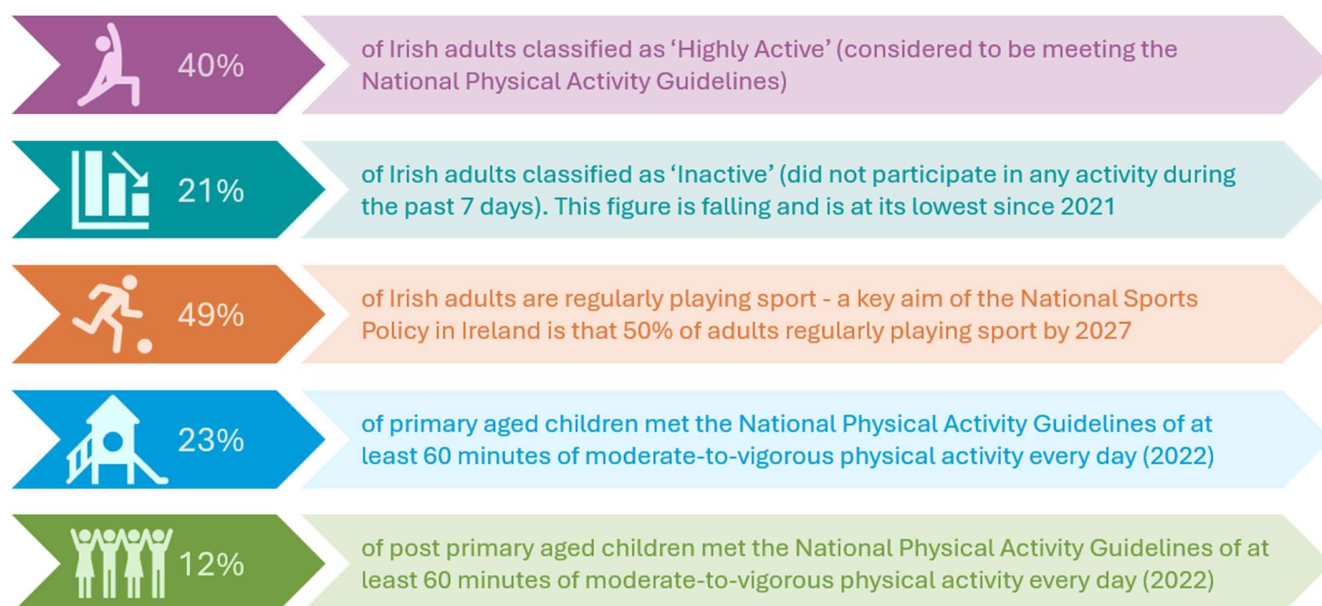
In September 2015, all 193 Member States of the United Nations agreed on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a shared plan to build a more sustainable, inclusive, and prosperous future. The agenda is guided by 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which address social, economic, and environmental challenges worldwide. By promoting walking, cycling, sport, active recreation, and play, investment in an active society can directly support the achievement of many of these goals. Through this Sport and Physical Activity Plan, Louth County Council demonstrates its commitment to the SDGs by encouraging active lifestyles for all and making a meaningful contribution to their delivery at a local level.



(17 Sustainable Development Goals)

Sport and Physical Activity Participation in Ireland

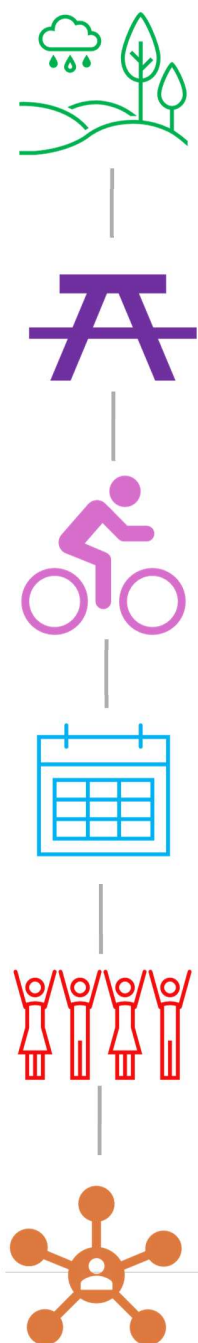
According to the Irish Sports Monitor Report (2024) and the most recent CSPPA (Children's Sport Participation and Physical Activity) Study (2022). Research proves that participation in sport, physical activity and recreation brings significant positive impact to people, communities, the environment and drives the economy.



Sport and Physical Activity in County Louth

A Whole Council Approach

A **whole-council approach** for the Local Sports Plan ensures that sport and physical activity is not treated as an isolated service but as a cross-cutting priority, integrated into land-use planning, transport infrastructure, environmental protection, and community development. Louth County Council, with relevant service areas will work collaboratively to reduce barriers and expand opportunities for participation.



Environment - Louth County Council recognises the importance of protecting and enhancing the natural environment while promoting outdoor sport and physical activity. The Sports Plan supports environmentally sustainable practices, encouraging responsible use of natural assets such as greenways, coastal areas, and rural landscapes to support active recreation.

Park/Spaces - The Council is committed to the provision, maintenance, and enhancement of high-quality parks and public open spaces that support sport, physical activity, and recreation for all ages and abilities. The Sports Plan promotes the use of these spaces for formal and informal activity, ensuring they are accessible, safe, and welcoming community assets unique to Louth.

Transport - Active travel is a key enabler of sport and physical activity in County Louth. The Sports Plan supports initiatives that encourage walking, cycling, and other sustainable transport options to access sports facilities, schools, parks, and community amenities, reducing reliance on cars and supporting healthier lifestyles.

Planning - Through integrated land-use and spatial planning, Louth County Council aims to ensure that sport and physical activity are embedded in the design of new developments and communities. The Sports Plan aligns with planning policies that promote access to recreational infrastructure, connectivity, and active design principles across the county.

Community - Community engagement is central to the delivery of sport and physical activity in County Louth. The Sports Plan supports collaboration with local clubs, schools, community groups, and voluntary organisations to increase participation, reduce barriers, and ensure inclusive opportunities for people of all backgrounds and abilities.

Louth Local Sports Partnership – County-wide sport and physical activity initiatives, engagement and partnership with sporting clubs and groups, national bodies to deliver opportunities and outcomes. Promotion of sport and physical opportunities in County Louth and collaboration with schools and community groups. Inclusion and sustainability for all throughout the lifecycle and developing structures and systems.

Sport Ireland recognises Louth Local Sports Partnership as an effective mechanism for delivering sport and physical activity opportunities to local communities across the county. In this context, Louth Sports Partnership (LSP) operates as a sub-structure of Louth County Council, guided by key stakeholders and influencers who are dedicated to promoting sport and physical activity across the county. The LSP is governed by the Louth Local Sports Partnership Committee. Active collaboration with external partners, both within and beyond county borders, is fundamental to LSP's success.

Targeted stakeholders include:

- Local sports clubs and communities
- National Governing Bodies of sport
- Statutory agencies
- Volunteers and the wider community
- Networks representing target groups.
- Sports providers, including coaches and trainers.

To achieve this the LSP is structured around four strategic themes:

Themes	Outcome
Active Opportunities & Places	A clear understanding of the sport & physical activity participation needs in the county
Active Partnerships & Supporting Communities	Effective collaborations with our stakeholders
Active Training, Educating & Empowering	An inclusive and ethical culture of sport in Louth
Active Capability, Capacity & Communications	An effective, sustainable, and transparent application of our resources

Key successes and headline figures



Key headline statistics can be found in Appendix 2.

The development of the Louth Sports Plan changes the landscape for Louth Local Sports Partnership. The whole council approach increases responsibility and accountability for sport and physical activity; however, the Louth Local Sports Partnership will be a key delivery agent within the plan, building on its successful track record, achievements, skills, resources, and capacity.

Our Facilities and Spaces

Louth has a strong and deep-rooted pedigree in sport and the varied array of top-class clubs and facilities in the county, which stand as a testament to the commitment of all sectors of the Community.

Public, private and community investment in facilities can be seen across the county and include, among many others.

- The New GAA stadium in Dundalk,
- The GAA Training Centre in Darver,
- Two League of Ireland Premier Division Clubs in Dundalk and Drogheda,
- The new Dundalk Tennis Arena,
- Dundalk Stadium Racecourse,
- DKIT Sport,
- County Louth Golf Club in Baltray,
- Dundalk Swimming Pool and Leisure Centre,
- Drogheda Swimming Pool and Leisure Centre,
- Dundalk Sports Centre &
- Lourdes Athletic stadium in Drogheda

While highlighting the quality and variety of existing and new facilities in Louth, this Plan also acknowledges the need for public, private and community led investment in additional new facilities, particularly at participation level, to meet the ever growing and expanding population of Louth and to meet the diverse and ever-changing needs of our increasingly culturally diverse communities. Most of the existing public and multi-use facilities and spaces in Louth are at capacity and while work continues to maximise access to underutilised facilities and spaces, the provision of accessible, inclusive and multi-use places, spaces and facilities, in these growing communities is integral to development of sport and physical activity on a countywide basis and to healthy, happy balanced lives for the people of Louth.

There are a wide range of facilities and spaces for sport and physical activity. Such facilities are available for use across the county, some of which are council owned and maintained while some are not. This provides a strong baseline for our Louth Local Sports Plan.

Physical Provision

There is a wealth of existing physical provision for sport in County Louth as illustrated in the graphic below:

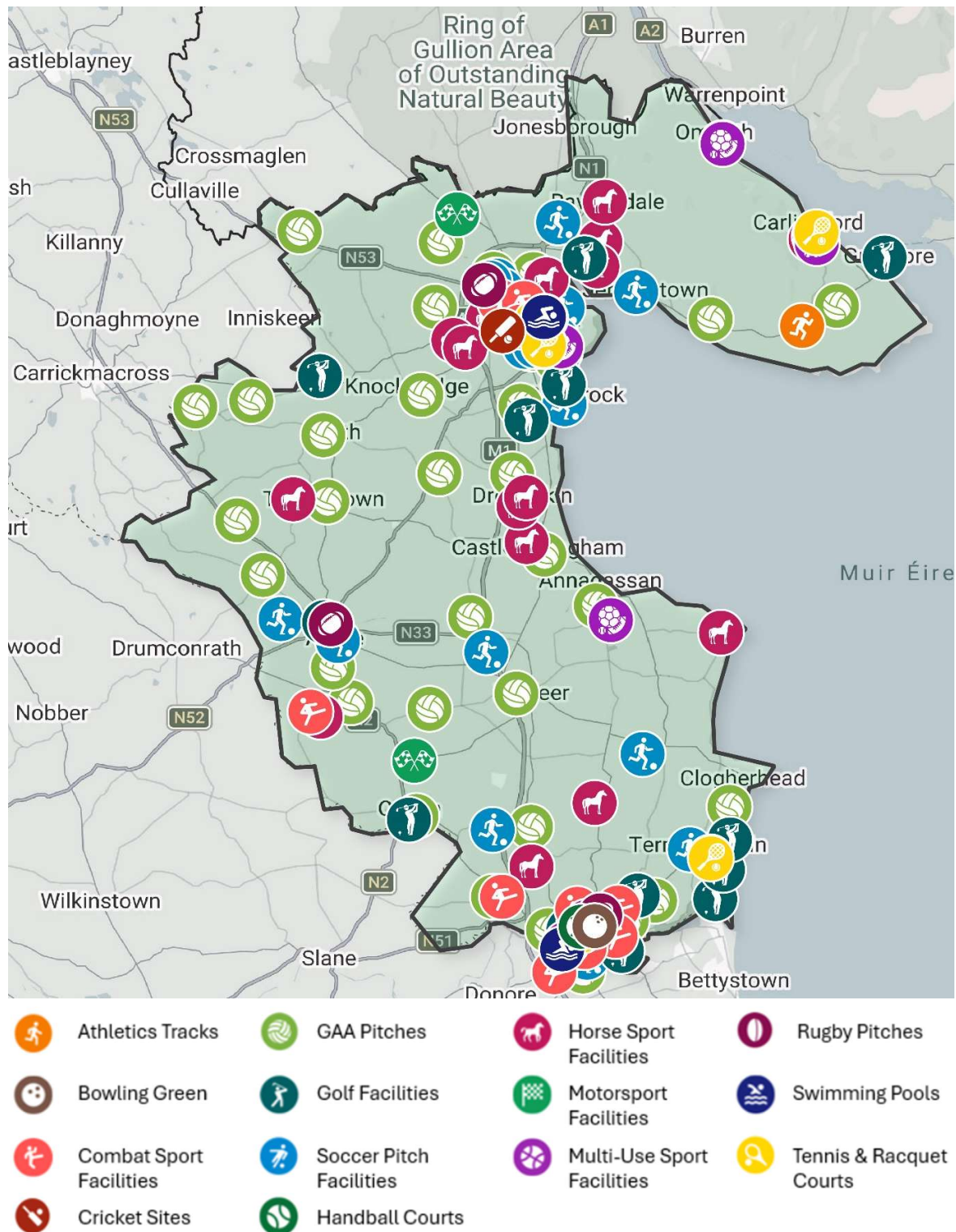


Local Sports Clubs and Groups

In County Louth 222 sports clubs and groups were identified, providing a diverse range of opportunities across Louth. This does not include the multitude of informal and ad hoc events organised by communities across Louth.



Analysis shows there are a wide range of facilities and spaces for sport and physical activity across County Louth, as illustrated in the graphic below. The map highlights the regional distribution of physical infrastructure for sport and active recreation across Louth. Together these assets provide a substantial baseline from which to further develop and deliver the aims of the Louth Local Sports and Physical Development Plan.



Participation Opportunities

County Louth offers a wide range of sport and physical activity participation opportunities, supported by numerous initiatives aimed at promoting and expanding access to physical activity. Many of these opportunities are community-led and delivered by local community and voluntary organisations, reflecting a strong culture of local engagement. In addition to formal programmes, a wide variety of informal and ad hoc activities are organised by communities across the county each year, further enriching the local activity landscape.

The Louth Local Sports Plan is being shaped by a community that is deeply committed to improving its health and wellbeing. While existing provision offers extensive opportunities to engage in sport and exercise, there remains scope to further develop and enhance the range, accessibility, and connectivity of facilities and programmes across the county. To address these challenges, the strategic vision is guided by **‘A County Louth where everyone is included, supported, and inspired to be active throughout life.’**

focusing on the development of safe and connected greenways, unlocking school facilities for community use, and delivering a broader range of high-quality, inclusive spaces that support participation across all ages and abilities.

Throughout County Louth there are a range of participation initiatives aimed at promoting and increasing opportunities in sport and physical activity.



Youth Leadership Programmes

Develop skills and confidence in teenagers, enabling them to become future leaders in their clubs and communities.



Louth All Star GAA for all

Louth Local Sports Partnership in partnership with Louth GAA continued to work with local GAA clubs, has developed several All-Star GAA for All programmes to support children with disabilities to participate in Gaelic Games within the mainstream club environment.



Louth Sport ability day

Louth Local Sports Partnership was delighted to celebrate International Day for persons with a disability, by hosting their second sport ability event. Highlighting the wide range of accessible sport and physical activity opportunities for persons with a disability in County Louth. The event provides attendees with an opportunity to experience a range of activities provided by local clubs such as, GAA, Football, Cycling, Dance, Yoga, Wheelchair Basketball, and many more.



Hockey 4 all

Louth Local Sports Plan collaborated with Boyne Hockey Club in Drogheda, to develop a Hockey 4 All programme for children with additional needs. As part of the initiative, club coaches and volunteers received Disability Inclusion Training and an equipment pack to help establish the activity. Louth's Local Sports Partnership Sport Inclusion Disability Officer also provided ongoing guidance and support. The programme has proven to be a remarkable success, with 12 children now attending weekly sessions, supported by a dedicated team of club coaches and volunteers.



High 5 Inclusive Boxing

Louth Local Sports Partnership supported the development of a new High 5 Inclusive Boxing programme. The programme offers inclusive boxing sessions specifically designed for children with autism and additional needs. It has been a remarkable success with 12 children attending weekly sessions, which support the development of their physical abilities, social skills, and self-confidence in a fun and welcoming environment.



Sisters Club

As part of the HER moves initiative, Louth Sports Partnership collaborated with Drogheda Wolves Basketball club to establish 'Sisters Club.' Offering a non-competitive, fun based environment for girls to play basketball in, many of whom were trying basketball for the first time.



Louth School Girls

The Louth School Girl's League has grown significantly, becoming a vital platform for encouraging physical activity among young girls, many of whom are playing football competitively for the first time.



Women's Social Basketball, Hockey, and Football programmes

The aim of these programmes is to provide regular team-based sporting activities to women aged 18 years and older, who are not currently playing competitive sport. These sessions are non-competitive, and fun based with a focus on enjoyment and socialising.



Women's Social Futsal

A 6-week programme aimed at women who have no experience playing football, the initiative will help them learn new skills, make new friends, and enjoy the game. The sessions focus on improving physical activity levels, while also encouraging social engagement and building connections with other women in the community.



Women's Flag Football

Louth mavericks' women's flag football is for all ages, abilities, and fitness levels. The programme will be run every week and continually welcomes new players of any ability or age.



SportUile

Driving change through sport, SportUile will use sport and physical activity as a mechanism for change. It's a community, sports led approach that will help deliver on many of the objectives in the Drogheda Implementation Plan. It will provide much needed support to local sporting clubs and organisations in providing more opportunities for sporting and physical activities.



Moneymore / Muirhevnamor sports hub

These hubs bring together local sports clubs, schools, community organisations, and youth groups to create inclusive, sustainable environments that promote health and wellbeing. Their core objectives include engaging underrepresented populations, supporting volunteer development, and providing accessible pathways into sport for people of all ages and abilities.



Park Runs

Dundalk, Drogheda, and junior park run continue to grow steadily. These free community led events provide a fun, inclusive, and accessible opportunity for people of all ages and abilities to engage in regular physical activity where everyone is welcome to come along, whether you can walk, jog, run, volunteer, or spectate. Louth Sports Partnership supports and encourages people to attend their local park run.



Sport Inclusion Disability Programme

Provide local and sustainable participation opportunities for people with disabilities, supporting both physical and social development.



Photo of Louth Disability Cycling Club, which is a community led cycling club dedicated to making cycling accessible to people of all ages and abilities.

Funding Opportunities



Louth Sports Partnership Small Club Grant Scheme

Louth Local Sports Partnership offers Small Club Grant Scheme funding to local Sports Clubs, Community Groups, Voluntary Organisations, and Disability Groups located in County Louth on an annual basis. The scheme offers grants of up to €1,500 per club to support initiatives aimed at attracting new members and enhancing ongoing participation.



Louth Sports Partnership Volunteer Support Grant

The Volunteer Support Programme aims to increase the number of people playing a leadership role in developing sports and physical activity in their communities. It also aims to support clubs in upskilling new and existing coaches and volunteers, to increase participation in sport and physical activity. This is done through the delivery of training and education courses to support volunteers in their development as community leaders/coaches of sport and physical activity. Clubs can receive up to €1000 each towards 50% of training and education costs of their Club Volunteers.



Louth County Council Community Grants

Louth County Council provides a range of grants to community sports, including sports clubs to assist with actions and projects being undertaken in their local area. These grants are intended to sustain community activity, active citizenship and promote community enhancement and environmental initiatives.



Local Enhancement Programme 2026

The LEP in County Louth will be administered by the Louth Local Community Development Committee (LCDC). Under the LEP 2026 there will be capital funding available to support community and voluntary groups, particularly in disadvantaged areas, with minor capital works and improvements to their facilities, and the purchase of equipment for community use. The Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht has allocated €239,207.33 capital funding to Louth LCDC.



Sports Club & Community Group

Louth Sports Partnership supports volunteers and communities to develop opportunities for people to participate in organised sport and physical activity. The small-scale grant aims to support initiatives to increase participation levels in Sport & Physical Activity. Proposed initiatives should attract new members or enhance ongoing participation. This grant also supports the setup of new clubs & groups and assists existing clubs & groups with initiatives to increase participation. Maximum Grant Awarded - €1,500.



Community Sport Facilities Fund

The Community Sport Facilities Fund provides grants to assist in the development or refurbishment of sport facilities and the provision of sports equipment. In 2024, clubs and sporting organisations in County Louth were allocated over €6.25 million from the fund.



LEADER Rural Development Programme

The LEADER Programme was designed to aid the development of sustainable rural communities. Sporting facilities are eligible for grant funding under the rural infrastructure and social inclusion section of the programme. With the help of LEADER funding, Roche Emmets GFC, evolved from a 'football' club to a community 'Hub' where all types of community activities can be catered for.



The Sports Capital Programme

The Sports Capital Programme is the primary vehicle for central government support for the development of sports and physical recreation facilities and the purchase of non-personal sports equipment. In 2024, County Louth received €1,405,138 in Regional Grants from the programme.



Large Scale Sport Infrastructure Fund

The Large-Scale Sports Infrastructure Fund (LSSIF) was established under the National Sports Policy 2018, to provide exchequer support for larger sports facility projects, typically those requiring investments greater than the maximum available under the Community Sport Facilities Fund. €173 Million was allocated in 2024, including €7.2 Million to St. Oliver's School, Louth.

Developing the Plan

Our Approach

The strategic planning process for County Louth involved extensive engagement with residents and key stakeholders over a focused three-month consultation period. The insights and feedback shared by participants played a central role in shaping and informing the development of the Louth Local Sports Plan, ensuring it reflects local needs, priorities, and experiences.

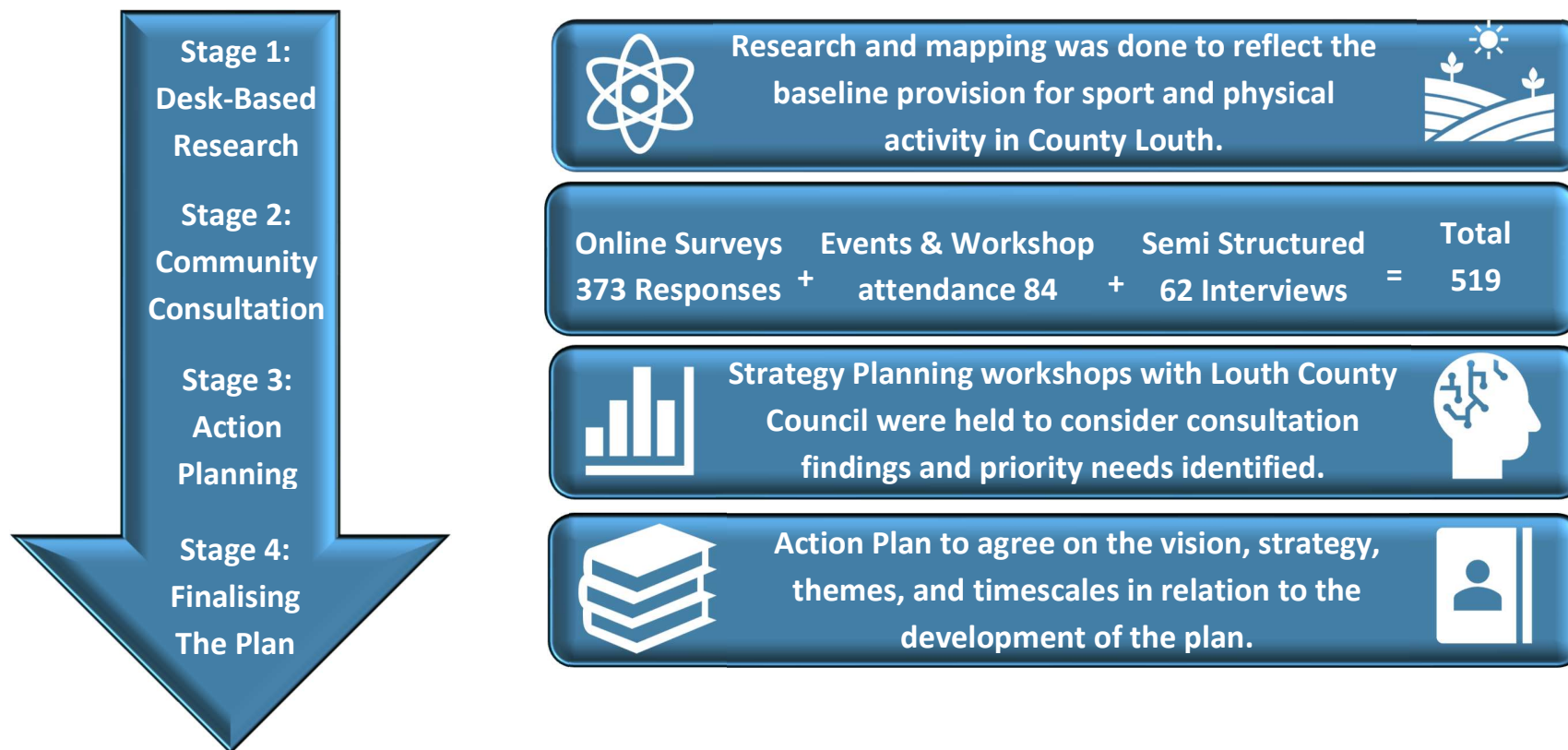
Consultation Findings

The development of the Louth Local Sports Plan was underpinned by a strong commitment to listening to and learning from the local communities. A mixed-methods engagement approach was adopted to capture a wide range of perspectives, ensuring that both strategic insights and everyday participation experiences were reflected.

Consultation took place over a three-month period from August to November 2025 and generated a total of 373 responses. This included 213 responses to the Louth Local Sports Plan survey and 160 responses from a dedicated Children and Young People survey, ensuring that the voices of younger residents were meaningfully represented.

Engagement also included three walk-in consultation sessions and approximately 62 semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders from local, regional, and national organisations. Two facilitated workshops were held to review and synthesise the findings. A total of 519 participants has been meaningfully engaged. Together, this process provided a balanced, inclusive, and robust evidence base to inform the priorities and actions set out in the Louth Local Sports Plan.

The Process



Key Insights

Participation in Sport and Physical Activity - Residents Survey

Adults



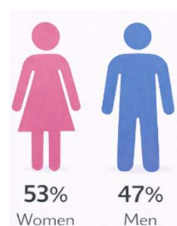
43% of respondents meet the National Guidelines by being active at least five times per week, achieving a minimum of 150 minutes of physical activity. This represents a solid baseline of regular physical activity on which to build existing positive behaviours.

22% of respondents are active 4 days a week. This group represents the most immediate opportunity for the Louth Local Sports Plan delivery; moving these individuals to just one extra day of activity would increase the percentage of those meeting national guidelines from 43% to 65%.



67% of respondents are active members of a sports or physical activity club or group, highlighting a strong culture of participation and community engagement, particularly to focus on retention and progression pathways.

The largest participation group was the 45-54 age bracket at 41%, closely followed by those aged 30-44 at 33%.



The data showed that 53% of respondents identified as woman, closely followed by 47% of men.

2% of respondents reported having a disability, however, still highlighting an opportunity to further engage and support people with disabilities to ensure inclusion in sport.





Participation was recorded across Ardee (30%), Drogheda (28%), and Dundalk (20%), with responses evenly distributed, while the demographic profile of respondents was broad, showing the highest engagement among adults aged 30+ & lower response rates from those aged 16–29.

Children

Average of 26% of children across primary and post-primary education meet the National Physical Activity Guidelines. Although some children achieve the recommended levels, further targeted programmes are needed, particularly as habits formed in early childhood underpin lifelong participation. Notably, 64% are active members of a club or organised group.



Meeting National Guidelines

Aggregate 26% meet national guidelines (avg 60 min / day)



Average of 73% of children and young people rate sport and physical activity as 'very important' or 'important', reflecting a strong culture of value and motivation. The key challenge is not awareness, but ensuring appropriate opportunities, facilities and access are in place to support increased regular participation.

64% of respondents were from Primary School children, with 46% of those children coming from 5th class, indicating particularly strong engagement at upper primary level and a solid representation from this age group within the survey.



36% of respondents came from Post Primary children, demonstrating meaningful participation from older students and ensuring the survey captured perspectives across both primary and post-primary education levels.

86% of children prefer social-physical activities highlights strong demand for fun, play, social connections, and shared experiences, and reinforces the need for programmes and spaces that support group, informal, and community-led activities.

Motivation for Sport and Physical Activity



The top 3 reasons why residents get involved with sport in County Louth:

County Louth residents are notably active, with a strong appreciation of sport and physical activity as a means of improving physical health, fitness, and mental and emotional wellbeing. This elevated level of motivation reflects clear demand for participation and indicates a community that is receptive to engaging with new initiatives, programmes, and events.

The social priority to engage in sport through a social lens indicates making social connections important with the top priority for ‘Organised Group Activities’ (27%) and being active with ‘Friends’ (19%). Solo activity (23%) supports the narrative of time constraints and use of using footpaths, trails, greenways, and roads.



Limited opening hours and fully booked facilities (60%) are major barriers that may push people

toward exercising alone on roads and footpaths because they cannot access the organised groups which are preferred.

Supporting motivated communities with the right facilities, programmes and safe welcoming spaces, sport and physical activity bring people together, reduces social isolation, fosters lifelong participation rooted in place and community. Initiatives such as the Louth Disability Cycling Club demonstrate the transformative impact of inclusive provision — building confidence through achievement, strengthening friendships, and creating meaningful pathways for continued participation.

Popular Places for Sport and Physical Activities

Adults

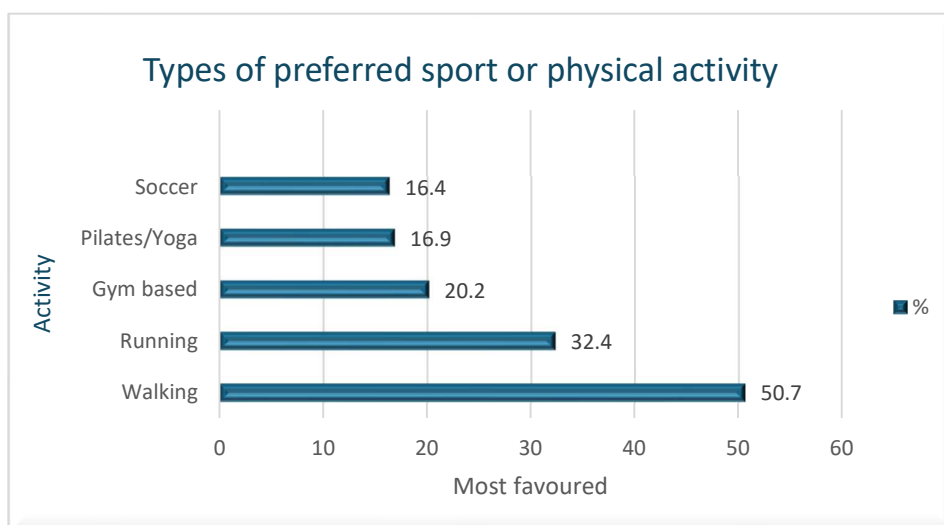
Outdoor facilities are the most used by respondents, while indoor facilities are among the top five most popular amenities.



Sport and physical activity in County Louth most commonly take place in everyday, close-to-home environments, with 46% of respondents reporting that they are active on footpaths and roads. This highlights the importance of safe, accessible public spaces and active travel infrastructure in supporting regular physical activity as part of daily life.

Gym-based activity was the next most common indoor setting, used by 29% of respondents reflecting continued demand for indoor, sporting structured facilities. Sports pitches (24%) and Indoor facilities (15%) used by respondents remain a vital component of formal sport participation, supporting clubs, teams, and organised activity.

Organised group activities and home-based activities facilitate self-directed physical activity that fits around work and family commitments. The top three activities in which adult respondents participate are walking (50%), running (32%), and gym-based exercise (20%), closely followed by Pilates/Yoga and soccer at approximately 16%.



These types of sport and physical activity indicate that adults tend to prefer individual, flexible non-club-based activities, which require minimal organisation and can be done at times which fit around work and family commitments. Investment in safe walking routes, greenways, lighting, footpaths, parks, and accessible gym facilities will create an investment in safe walking routes, greenways, lighting, footpaths, parks, and accessible gym facilities will have a significant impact on physical activity levels. These insights are broadly in keeping with the results from the national Irish Sports Monitor. Consultations indicated there is need for growth of emerging sports, especially to support Louth's ambition of being a sporting county building on its values of tradition. Evolution of newer sports will support increases in participation opportunities.

Private providers account for the highest level of usage (39%), highlighting strong demand for commercially operated gyms, studios, clubs, and activity providers. This trend may reflect capacity pressures within public facilities, geographical gaps in provision, or a growing preference for flexible, on-demand, paid-for options.

Public facilities continue to play a critical role in supporting community participation and must be more evenly distributed and accessible across the county. Notably, a considerable proportion of respondents are not using any facilities at all, pointing to challenges around access, affordability, awareness, or inclusion.

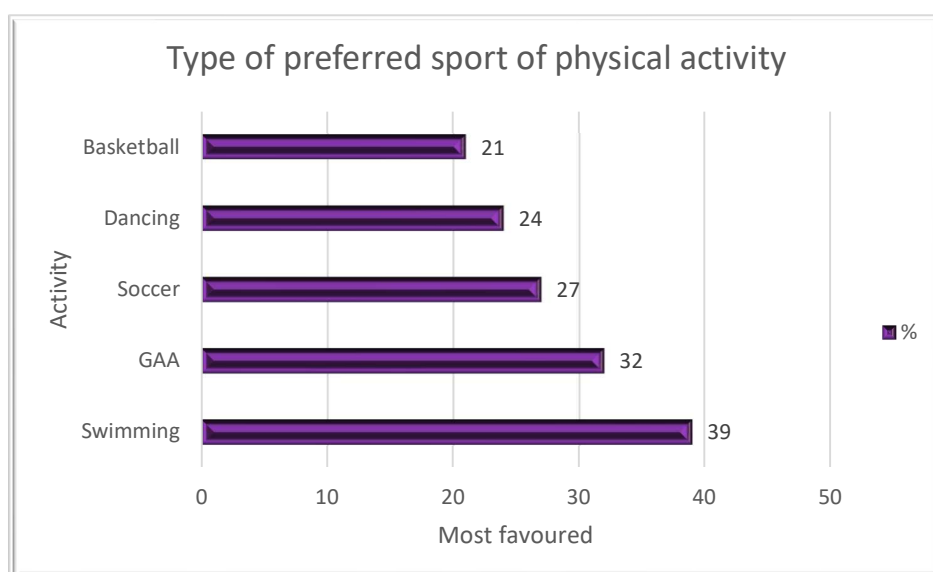
Children and Young People



Most respondents identified particular settings as preferable for children and young people to be physically active. This highlights the environments in which they feel most comfortable and motivated to participate. Children value spontaneous, independent, and local play coupled with proximity to make activity more accessible. There is demand for playgrounds and outdoor activity spaces for intergeneration and inclusive design, with the importance of maintenance and safety. Indoor facilities are valued, especially for more structured, social activity with aquatic infrastructure an indoor asset. Children and young people also value local, free low-cost and easy to access amenities. There is demand for both neighbourhood-level infrastructure and formal indoor facilities. Safe and social spaces are part of a holistic approach to sport and physical activity.



The most popular choices of children’s favourite activities outside of school, were playing outside with friends (60%), playing sports (53%), and meeting friends in person (42%). Creative activities (30%) are popular as playing online games alone (30%), while digital play at home (26%) ranked lower than outdoor play. These findings strongly suggest that children really value face-to-face interaction and physical movement in outdoor spaces.



Swimming emerged as a top priority emphasising strong demand and the importance of serving children and young people in something they enjoy. The continued strength of field sports as one of the main sporting activities in County Louth is central to community life. The continued growth of female soccer is not currently matched by sufficient physical infrastructure. Dancing suggests programming should not be overly club-sport focused. Demand exists for accessible indoor spaces due to limited availability for facilities.

Overall (73%) of children place a high value on being physically active, only (9%) said it was of low importance, highlighting widespread support for active living.

Opportunities to be Active in Louth

Opportunities to participate in Sport, Physical Activity & Recreation



Both surveys and consultations identified an initiative-taking, vocal and engaged community that is eager for improved infrastructure to meet high activity levels, rather than show any lack of interest. While the adult residents survey rated perceived opportunities to participate in sport, physical activity, and recreation as 5 out of 10, suggesting moderate satisfaction overall, there is a strong signal that opportunities exist, specifically aimed at improving access, availability, and quality across the county. County Louth's natural assets are the primary drivers of activity for unstructured exercise with walking (51%), running (32%) and cycling (14%) the most

Children and young people indicated that it is 'good' for them to be physically active with 8 of 10 perceive more opportunities would lead them to become more active.



The findings indicate that while swimming, Gaelic football and soccer remain highly popular among young people, participation is often constrained by practical barriers such as poor weather, academic pressures, and limited access to local facilities. Although sporting engagement is highly valued, respondents consistently identified the need for additional indoor courts and accessible community spaces to better support year-round activity. Social interaction is a strong driver of

participation, with many young people preferring to be active informally in gardens and outdoor spaces or through organised club settings. Overall, the survey highlights a clear appetite for diverse sporting opportunities and improved infrastructure, demonstrating how youth identity, geography and environmental factors shape participation patterns and influence health & wellbeing outcomes.

Barriers to Sport and Physical Activity

To encourage active lifestyles and grow participation in sport and physical activity across the county, it is essential to reduce barriers that prevent people from getting involved. Feedback from our consultation process has highlighted several key areas that need to be addressed to ensure opportunities are accessible and inclusive for all residents.

Adults

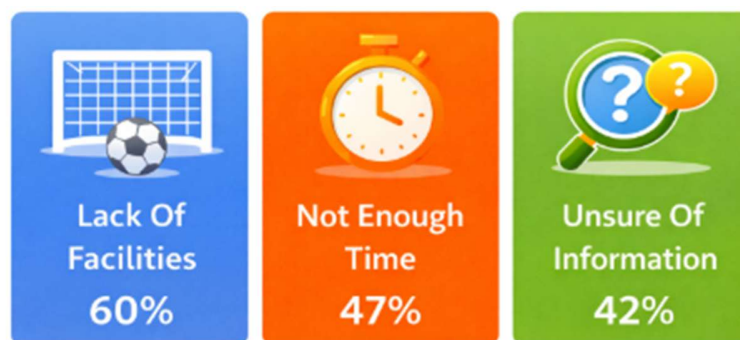


Survey and consultation findings indicate that infrastructure, rather than personal motivation, is the primary factor limiting participation in sport and physical activity. Respondents consistently

highlighted the need to improve access to high-quality, affordable indoor and outdoor facilities, through unlocking underutilised assets and improving planning processes.

Respondents indicated an urgent need for more local facilities, identifying key barriers as: “too far from where I live” (45%); limited opening hours (28.2%); facilities often fully booked (28%); and cost (22%). Facilities, programmes, and initiatives need to be more evenly distributed across County Louth or better connected through improved transport links and safe walking and cycling routes. Greater consideration should also be given to the importance of more localised, community-based provision.

Children



Children and young people identified having access to more facilities, such as improved swimming pool facilities, multi-use sports facilities, playgrounds and spaces, indoor and outdoor venues and spaces will increase participation in sport and physical activity.

Respondents identified balancing competing demands such as work, education and family time makes it difficult to prioritise regular activity with daily routines. Flexible opening hours, local facilities, and minimal travel distances are key factors in improving access to sport and physical activity opportunities.

Children and young people stated that poor weather, academic pressures, limited local spaces, and concerns about safety can reduce opportunities to be active outdoors. These findings highlight the importance of investing in accessible indoor facilities, all-weather and well-lit outdoor spaces, safe routes to play areas, and structured programmes that fit around school commitments. Strengthening these areas can help create year-round, safe, and confidence-building opportunities for young people to be active and play.

26% of children and young people indicated they were unsure what is available in terms sport and physical activity knowledge. Sharing information and using media channels will improve awareness.

64% of children and young people respondents indicated they belonged to a sports club or physical activity group indicating there is a healthy culture of participation in County Louth, together with social, structured team-based aspects of sport which are highly valued. This highlights the importance of sustaining and supporting club and community structures, while also ensuring inclusive pathways for those not currently participating.

Volunteers are the backbone of sport and physical activity in County Louth. Across towns, villages and rural communities, a dedicated and passionate volunteer base sustains clubs, organises competitions, coaches' young people, maintains facilities and fosters a strong sense of belonging. This culture of volunteerism is deeply embedded in County Louth's sporting tradition, particularly within field sports, but extends across a wide and growing range of activities.

The strength of this volunteer network not only enables participation at grassroots level, but also builds social capital, leadership, and community resilience. Volunteers create safe, welcoming environments where individuals of all ages can develop skills, confidence, and friendships. As demand for sport and physical activity continues to grow, supporting and sustaining this volunteer base will be critical. Investing in volunteer development, recognition and succession planning will ensure that County Louth's tradition of community-led sport continues to thrive and evolve.



Photo: The LLSP Award Night is a special celebration recognising the dedication, passion and achievements of clubs, volunteers, and participants across Louth. It brings the sporting community together to honour those who make a lasting difference in promoting active and healthy lifestyles throughout the county.

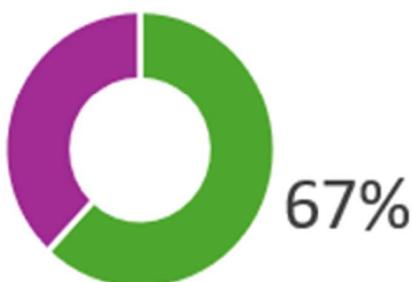
Key Insights continued at-a-glance

Participation In Sport & Physical Activity

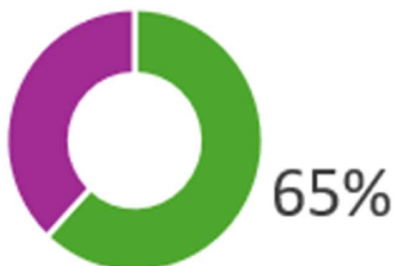
Adult Survey Data



62% on average participated in physical activity in Louth's Outdoors



67% are part of a sport or physical activity club/group



65% agreed that improved facilities would help improve participation levels

Children & Young People Survey Data



64% of children are apart of a physical activity club/group



86% agreed they preferred social-physical activities



26% of primary & post primary met the National Physical Activity Guidelines

Key Messages from Consultations

Future of Sport and Physical Activity

Facilities

Looking to the future, there is a clear and shared opportunity to strengthen sport and physical activity across County Louth by investing in more flexible, multi-use sporting facilities and making better use of the county's outstanding natural assets.

Unlocking school facilities and better optimisation of County Louth's existing sport and physical activity assets presents a powerful opportunity to strengthen communities and maximise the value of these across the county. Schools are often at the heart of their communities, with high-quality halls, pitches and courts that can become vibrant hubs of activity beyond the school day. By opening existing spaces for evening and weekend use, we can expand local opportunities, support growing clubs, and provide accessible venues within walking distance of neighbourhoods. Transforming underutilised spaces into vibrant, accessible hubs of physical activity through targeted activation initiatives, coordinated partnership delivery and inclusive programming to make better use of these assets.

This approach not only enhances participation and inclusion, but also strengthens the connection between schools, families, neighbourhoods, and communities, creating clear, lifelong pathways into sport and physical activity for all.

Infrastructure

Improving access to landscapes, waterways, trails and cycling and walking routes, supported by high-quality amenities will enable more people to be active in ways that suit their lifestyles and interests.

Access & Connectivity

Improving access to both indoor and outdoor facilities close to where people live will increase participation, as motivation is strong. However, practical barriers such as location, availability, affordability, and safe, well-maintained facilities, remain and should be addressed.

Communication and Visibility

Enhanced communication and promotion will ensure communities are aware of the wide range of opportunities already available, while thoughtful leisure planning within new housing developments can help embed physical activity into everyday life.

Opportunities

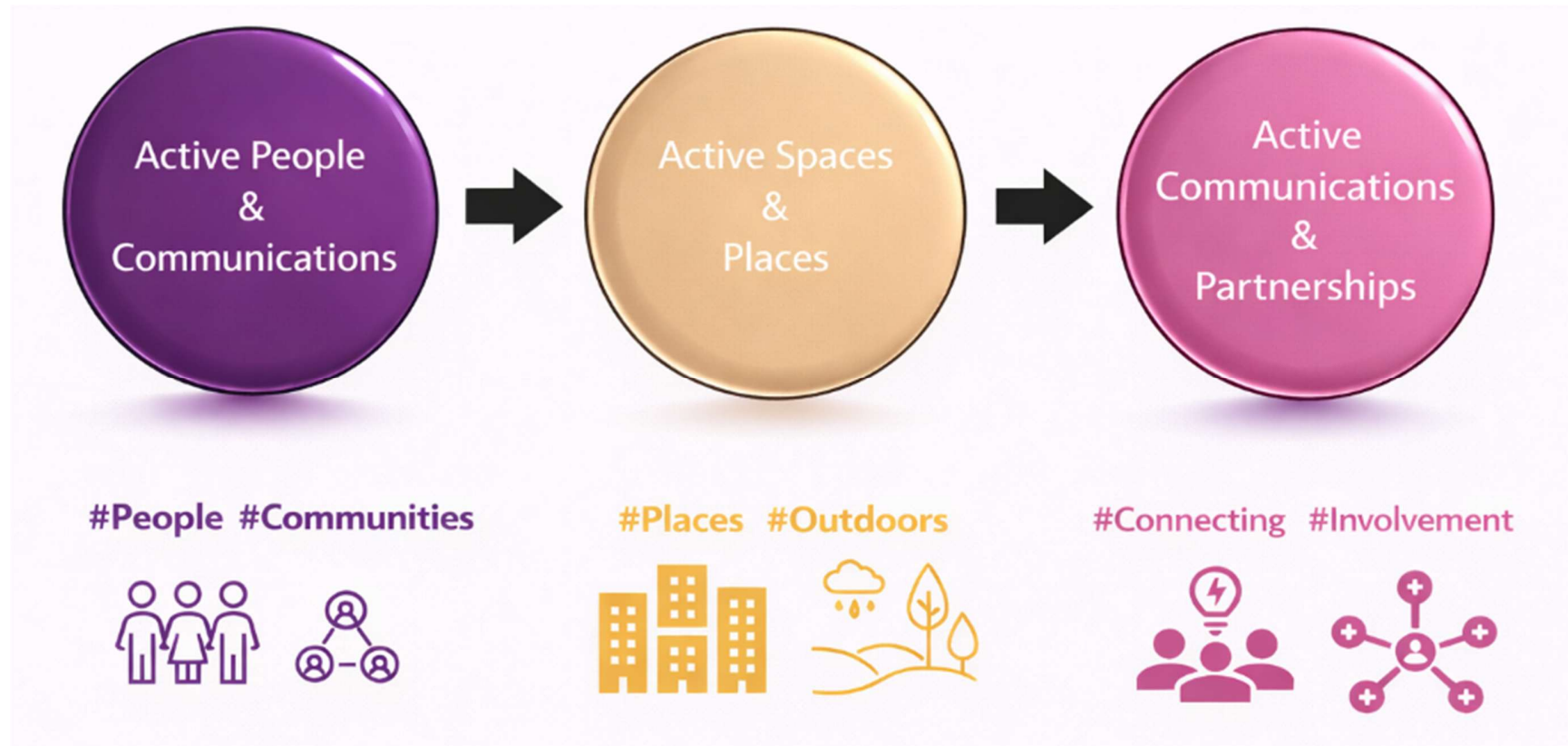
The future of emerging sports in County Louth reflects a broader evolution in how people choose to be active. Participation is no longer defined solely by traditional team-based competition; it increasingly includes flexible, social, lifestyle and individual activities that fit around modern lives. Emerging sports such as urban and wheeled sports, dance, basketball, cycling disciplines, outdoor adventure activities, and non-traditional fitness formats are reshaping the sporting landscape by offering alternative pathways into lifelong participation.

This evolution presents a significant opportunity which often appeals to young people who may not connect with traditional structures, particularly during the teenage years when drop-off rates increase. They provide inclusive, less formal environments that prioritise enjoyment, self-expression, and social connection. They also attract more diverse participants, including girls and young women, people with disabilities, and culturally diverse communities, thereby broadening the reach of sport across County Louth.

Together, these actions present a significant opportunity to create a more connected, accessible, and active county, where sport and physical activity are an integral part of healthy, vibrant, and sustainable communities.

The key points which came out of the consultation plan will be reflected in the action plan section.

Louth Local Sports Plan Strategic Themes



Strategic Themes - Priorities

Priorities Themes	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3
Active People and Communities	Increase sport and physical participation in disadvantaged areas and amongst priority targets groups.	Empower and build capacity of people, clubs, and organisations to provide sustainable sport & physical activity opportunities.	Build Active communities, using sport and physical activity to improve the health and wellbeing of people.
	Priority 4	Priority 5	Priority 6
Active Spaces and Places	Optimise our natural environment to increase participation in sport and physical activity in the outdoors.	Address the need for increased access to high quality indoor and outdoor sport and physical activity facilities and spaces in all parts of the County.	Optimise our existing spaces and places such as community centres, parks, leisure centres, libraries, and schools as places where sport, physical activity and recreation can occur.
	Priority 7	Priority 8	Priority 9
Active Communication and Partnership	Enhance the profile and visibility of sport and physical activity, communicate our impact with evidence.	Embed effective, accountable, and integrated systems and structures with the right resources to deliver our plan.	Proactively engage and collaborate with a wide range of people and partners in the delivery of our sport and physical activity priorities.

Active People and Communities

Why this theme is important?

Consultation findings highlight that people in County Louth experience a range of barriers to increasing their participation in sport and physical activity. These barriers are not uniform and can vary depending on factors such as location, age, gender, ethnicity, and disability. At the same time, the consultation also showed that people have diverse preferences when it comes to how they choose to be active.

This Plan recognises the broad spectrum of participation, from informal activity such as walking in the countryside and enjoying County Louth's distinctive natural assets - including mountains, coastline, rivers, and rural landscapes. This plan also covers exercising at home or in gyms, participating in traditional field sports, individual pursuits, water-based and emerging activities, or engaging in competitive sport through clubs and schools.

In response, the Plan places a strong emphasis on increasing opportunity and choice that enable people to be more active in ways that suit their interests and circumstances. Much of this work is already supported through the Local Sports Partnership, alongside an extensive network of clubs, groups, and organisations underpinned by a strong, community-based, and volunteer-led sporting culture.

The Plan recognises and values the vital role played by local clubs, community groups, organisations, and National Governing Body partners. Collaborating with these partners is central to delivering the Plan's priorities and achieving sustainable outcomes.

For many people, motivation to participate in sport and physical activity is linked to improving health and wellbeing, supporting mental health, or strengthening social connections and friendships. Recognising that physical activity is a cornerstone of good health and wellbeing, the Plan also emphasises the importance of partnership working across the wider health and wellbeing sector.

The "Active People and Communities" pillar is foundational to the success of County Louth's sports and recreation strategy. While there is a vibrant and committed base of volunteers and participants, significant and systemic barriers related to cost, access, and inclusion persist. To build truly active communities, the County Louth Local Sports Plan must prioritise targeted investment in disadvantaged areas, create robust support systems for volunteers and clubs, and embed meaningful community consultation into all stages of planning and development. By doing so, County Louth can leverage the clear potential of its people to foster a culture of health, well-being, and social inclusion.

Strategic Theme: Active People and Communities					
Strategic Priority	Headline Action/Initiative	Commitments	Values	Timeline	Lead Department/Body
Increase sport and physical participation in disadvantaged areas and amongst priority target groups. (Underrepresented groups)	1. Support an inclusive annual programme of sport and physical activity opportunities and initiatives that engage identified target groups, including disadvantaged communities, families, older adults, underrepresented groups, newcomers, LGBTQI+, and people of all abilities. Description: Provide funding, educational training and resources to clubs and groups to support increased participation for underrepresented groups. There is an identified need to have a targeted equity driven approach to these groups to strengthen inclusivity.	2 & 6	Inclusivity & Equity	Annually	LSP
	2. Collaborate with National Governing Bodies (NGBs) at national regional, and local levels to explore the establishment of sports-specific development officers with a multi-sport remit. Description: Focus on related disciplines, for example racquet sports and/or paddles sports.	2, 3, 4, 6	Inclusivity & Equity & Empowerment	Annually	LSP
	3. Using national data (Irish Sports Monitor) and local data sources, develop a detailed baseline of sports and physical activity participation in County Louth. Description: This aims to identify target groups, communities, or areas requiring focused interventions to promote and sustain participation.	1, 2, 3, 4	Collaboration & Partnership & Sustainability and long-term	Ongoing	LSP/NGBs
	4. Identify opportunities to engage with local sports and physical activity Ambassadors from target communities to promote participation. Description: Relatable role models reflect the diversity of the community, helping to ensure target groups, women, young people, older adults, additional needs groups, newcomers feel welcome, are enabled to try sports and stay involved. New emerging sports function as mechanism for breaking barriers.	3, 5, 6	Collaboration & Partnership & Sustainability and long-term impact & Innovation	Annually	LSP/NGBs
	5. Continue to develop, support, empower and grow Youth and Teen Participation & Leadership Programmes including the provision of inclusive, low-pressure recreational opportunities for those aged 13 and over, aiming to reduce drop-out rates to improve engagement in physical activity. Description: To address the need to target the critical periods when many young people drop out of sport and physical activity and empower teenagers to lead sport and physical activity in their community. Examples are TY Leadership programme with the Local Sports Partnership.	2, 3, 4, 6	Inclusivity & Equity & Empowerment	Ongoing	LSP/NGBs & Community sport groups
	6. Optimise access to funding from Sport Ireland, Dormant Accounts, DRCDG and other available streams to design and deliver targeted sports and physical activity programmes for priority groups. Description: Coordinated funding planning across the Local Authority, Local Sports Partnership, and key delivery partners; supporting clubs, schools, and community groups to access funding through guidance, training, and partnership approaches; and ensuring programmes are evidence-based, inclusive and sustainable.	1, 2, 3, 4	Collaboration & Partnership, Sustainability, and long-term impact & Inclusivity & Equity & Empowerment	Ongoing	LSP

	7. Facilitate and support affordable family and intergenerational sports and physical activity opportunities to increase participation. Description: To play sports and physical activity more accessible to low-income families and marginalized groups	1, 2, 3, 4	Collaboration & Partnership & Sustainability and long-term impact Inclusivity & Equity	Ongoing	LSP
	8. Continue to support the management and operation of community sport and physical activity hubs across County Louth. Description: To strengthen access to sport and physical activity for underserved and disadvantaged communities.	1, 2, 4, 5, 6	Collaboration & Partnership & Sustainability and long-term impact	Ongoing	LSP
	9. Continue to engage with Sport Ireland and key funders to highlight local funding needs and maximise opportunities to deliver sport and physical activity opportunities. Description: Continued engagement to identify the best possible investment opportunities to deliver a wide range of activities and opportunities which are aligned with local needs and national priorities.	1, 2, 4, 5, 6	Collaboration & Partnership & Sustainability and long-term impact	Ongoing	LSP

Strategic Theme: Active People and Communities					
Strategic Priority	Headline Action/Initiative	Commitments	Values	Timeline	Lead Department/Body
2. Empower and build capacity of people, clubs, and organisations to provide sustainable sport & physical activity opportunities	10. Identify opportunities to bring together representatives of sporting and physical activity groups and clubs, promoting collaboration, networking, shared understanding, and the exchange of skills and best practice. Description: Identify opportunities to enhance collaboration, networking, and the sharing of knowledge, skills, and good practice among clubs and community groups. Provide targeted training and guidance in key areas such as funding applications, governance, digital media, outdoor event management, insurance, and health and safety to build organisational capacity and support sustainable delivery where needs are identified.	3, 5, 6	Collaboration & Partnership & Sustainability and long-term impact & Innovation	Ongoing	LSP
	11. Support and strengthen County Louth's community-led and volunteer-driven sporting and physical activity networks by building local capacity, leadership, and collaboration. Description: Strengthen sport and physical activity participation across Louth by enhancing local coaching pathways, volunteer development to address volunteer burnout and develop an improving pipeline of resources. Offering training for navigating complex funding systems/processes.	1, 2, 4, 5, 6	Collaboration & Partnership & Sustainability and long-term impact & Innovation, Empowerment	Ongoing	LSP
	12. Continue to deliver club development initiatives, including access to small grants, needs analyses, and providing information support. Description: Support the ongoing development and sustainability of sports clubs across County Louth by providing access to small grants and offering practical information and guidance. The aim is to strengthen club capacity, support volunteers, improve governance and planning, and help clubs continue to provide quality, inclusive sport, and physical activity opportunities within their communities.	1, 2, 4, 5, 6	Collaboration & Partnership & Sustainability and long-term impact & Innovation, Empowerment	Ongoing	LSP

	13. National Governing Bodies continue to support Clubs to develop participation plans focused on retaining members and creating inclusive entry points for beginners. Description: NGB support enables clubs to retain members, welcome beginners, and deliver inclusive, sustainable participation opportunities aligned with national best practice.	2, 5, 6	Collaboration & Partnership & Sustainability and long-term impact & Innovation	Ongoing	NGB
	14. Continue to support existing volunteer recognition through awards and best practice examples. Recognise and celebrate local club success stories that demonstrate community impact and innovation. Description: Improve awareness and build upon strong existing role models that exist in County Louth.	2, 5, 6	Collaboration & Partnership, Empowerment & Sustainability, and long-term impact & Innovation	Ongoing	LSP
	15. Support and empower clubs, community groups, and schools to work together through shared training, resources and structured pathways that enable seamless participation and long-term engagement. Description: Strengthening capacity of people clubs and organisations by focusing on building relationships.	1, 2, 6	Collaboration & Partnership, Empowerment & Sustainability, and long-term impact & Innovation	Ongoing	LSP
	16. In partnership, to grow and broaden the sporting landscape by creating more choice and opportunities for people of all ages and abilities. Description: Allows the opportunity to offer wider range of sports to introduce new emerging sports to increase participation in physical activities.	1,2,3,4,5,6	Collaboration & Partnership, Empowerment & Sustainability and long-term impact & Innovation, Inclusivity & Equity	Ongoing	LSP
	17. Continue to develop and grow Community-led activity hubs in Urban and Rural areas to develop sport and physical activity opportunities for all ages and abilities. Description: Addresses the need for travel barriers and to use local facilities improving efficiencies.	2,4,5,6	Empowerment & Sustainability and long-term impact	Ongoing	LSP

Strategic Theme: Active People and Communities					
Strategic Priority	Headline Action/Initiative	Commitments	Values	Key Measures Success Timeline, Priority	Lead Department/Body
3. Build Active communities, using sport and physical activity to improve the health and wellbeing of people across County Louth	18. Embed sport and physical activity within local health, wellbeing, and social inclusion initiatives by further developing new and existing integration and collaboration between local stakeholders such as: Local Sports Partnerships, Healthy Louth Coordinator, Sláintecare, Age Friendly. Partner with HSE Health community initiatives. Description: Strengthening collaboration with identified key partners to improve health and well-being.	1, 2, 4, 5, 6	Collaboration & Partnership, Empowerment & Sustainability and long-term impact & Innovation, Inclusivity & Equity	Ongoing	LCC, HSE, LCDC
	19. Explore opportunities to develop sport and physical activity initiatives through social prescribing, creating strong connections with primary care services, through the Sláintecare and Healthy Louth roles.	1, 2, 4, 5, 6	Collaboration & Partnership, Empowerment & Sustainability and long-term impact & Innovation, Inclusivity & Equity	Ongoing	LCC, HSE, LCDC
	20. Support clubs and community groups to develop non-competitive, social, and recreational opportunities such as walking groups, couch-to-5K, multi-sport sessions, and family focused initiatives. Description: Broadens access to sport and physical activity. Focus on rural communities who often have limited access.	2,5,6	Collaboration & Partnership, Empowerment & Sustainability, and long-term impact	Ongoing	LSP
	21. Continue to support and grow participation in walking, cycling, running, and swimming through events, initiatives, and national partnerships. Description: These popular activities are identified as suitable for all ages and is a gateway to establishing health and well-being, strengthening community engagement.	1, 2,4, 6	Collaboration & Partnership, Empowerment & Sustainability, and long-term impact	Ongoing	LSP, LCC, NGBs
	22. Continue to ensure access to key training and education workshops, courses and initiatives e.g. safeguarding, First Aid etc. Description: To continue to support safety and reduce risk of harm, together with building community trust, providing skills and knowledge, confidence building.	1, 2,4, 6	Collaboration & Partnership, Empowerment & Sustainability, and long-term impact & Innovation	Ongoing	LSP and NGBs

Key Success Measures

1. Increased Participation Across Target Groups:
Year-on-year growth in the total number of participants engaged in programmes, by target group (e.g. age, gender, disability, socio-economic background)
2. Positive qualitative feedback from participants on accessibility, inclusivity, and enjoyment of programmes
2. Positive Participant Experience:
Qualitative feedback from participants indicating positive experiences, accessibility and inclusivity of programmes, captured through surveys, focus groups and engagement with diverse groups.
3. Strengthened Cross-Sector Collaboration:
Year-on-year increase in the number of collaborative programmes delivered in partnership with National Governing Bodies, and health and wellbeing sector partners
4. Increased Investment and Resource Allocation:
Growth in the level of funding allocated under this strategic theme compared to the baseline year, demonstrating increased investment in priority actions
5. Percentage increase in participants meeting the National Physical Activity Guidelines

Active Spaces and Places

Why this theme is important?

The development of new and improvement facilities is a key priority for County Louth over the next five years, with this need strongly articulated by residents, children and young people, and stakeholders alike. There is a significant opportunity to capitalise on the county's abundance of natural assets as spaces where people can be active more often, particularly through improving access to landscapes and trail networks. This will be addressed in greater detail through a dedicated Outdoor Recreation Plan.

Consultation feedback also highlighted the need for continued investment in both indoor and outdoor facilities across the County Louth. Limited access to indoor venues has resulted in long waiting lists for club members, while high rental costs are impacting affordability and participation. There is clear demand for all-weather pitches, indoor sports halls, running tracks, outdoor basketball courts, and dedicated facilities for girls' football. In addition, respondents identified the need for upgrades to swimming pool facilities, improved provision in key urban areas currently underserved by playgrounds, and the development of more intergenerational play spaces across the county.

While the provision of new facilities is a clear priority, consultees also emphasised the importance of upgrading and maintaining existing spaces to optimise their use. This includes improvements to lighting, safety, toilet and changing facilities, and accessibility. Unlocking the potential of underutilised school facilities was also identified as a significant opportunity to improve access for local clubs and communities, while strengthening the role of schools as integral hubs within their local areas and helping to reduce barriers to participation.

As enhancements to spaces and places progress, there is also a need to embed a sport and physical activity lens within the planning and design stages of projects, supported by co-design principles and joined up working across strategies and plans. This approach will help future-proof new developments across County Louth, ensuring they are optimised for sport and physical activity and increase opportunity and choice for residents, clubs, and communities.

Strategic Theme: Active Spaces and Places					
Strategic Priority	Headline Action/Initiative	Commitments	Values	Timeline	Lead Department/Body
4.Optimise our natural environment to increase participation in sport and physical activity in the outdoors	23. Implement a structured and coordinated approach to Outdoor Recreation in county Louth, through the County Outdoor Recreation Committee (CORC) actions from the Outdoor Recreation strategy and support the establishing a stakeholder forum. Description: Coordinated support for County Louth's Outdoor Recreation Plan to guide the sustainable development, management, and promotion of outdoor recreation across the county. The plan will provide a framework for investment, policy alignment, and partnership working to enhance participation opportunities and support the conservation of Louth's natural and recreational sites. LSP will oversee the delivery through Outdoor Recreation Officer.	1, 2, 3, 5, 6	Collaboration & Partnership, Inclusivity & Equity, Sustainability and Long-Term Impact	Ongoing	LCC, CORC, LSP
	24. Maximise emerging funding opportunities from Sport Ireland, ORIS, LEADER, and Dormant Accounts to support the development and implementation of outdoor recreation initiatives. Description: Support the identifying and leveraging of funding opportunities.	1, 2, 3, 5, 6	Collaboration & Partnership, Inclusivity & Equity, Sustainability and Long-Term Impact	Ongoing	LCC, CORC, LSP
	25. Pursue and secure funding to recruit a dedicated Outdoor Recreation Officer to deliver the Outdoor Recreation plan to increasing participation, integrated with the Local Sports Partnership. (<i>Sport Ireland is the strategic funder</i>). Description: Appoint a dedicated Outdoor Recreation Officer to implement the Outdoor Recreation Plan to drive participation in outdoor activities. Until the resource is in post, the LSP/Rural Outdoor Recreation officer will manage the interim action.	1, 2, 3, 5, 6	Collaboration & Partnership, Inclusivity & Equity, Sustainability and Long-Term Impact	Tbc	LCC
	26. Seek ways to develop a countywide network of walking and cycling groups that activate and promote local trails, greenways and recreational routes, supporting health, social connection, and sustainable tourism, with a focus on under-served areas in the south of County Louth. Description: Leverages and harnesses the existing community strengths and supports community collaboration.	1, 2, 3, 5, 6	Collaboration & Partnership, Empowerment & Sustainability and long-term impact & Innovation, Inclusivity & Equity	Medium Term	LCC, LSP, Outscape NI, Walking for All Officer
	27. Build upon the Outdoor Recreation plan physical activities of cycling, walking and water sports through activating spaces using community programmes, events, and initiatives (e.g. Walk the Cooley Trail, Get Louth Walking, Cycle for All). Description: Activate outdoor spaces for sport and physical activities through events and programmes. Focus is on community and creating social connections through sport and physical activities and supports health and well-being.	1, 2, 3, 5, 6	Collaboration & Partnership, Empowerment & Sustainability, and long-term impact & Innovation,	Medium Term	CORC, LCC
	28. Work in partnership with 'Sports Activity and Transport' providers to explore connections to transport links; and support the identification of better infrastructure opportunities (Bicycle storage and docking stations). Description: To improve the connectivity and create linkages between sport and physical activities across County Louth.	1, 2, 3, 5, 6	Collaboration & Partnership, Innovation	Medium Term	LCC
	29. Enhance access to essential amenities at key destinations, including beaches, mountains, and trails by improving changing facilities, lighting, toilets, and entry points. Description: Addresses the infrastructure and access deficits.	1, 2, 3, 5, 6	Collaboration & Partnership, Innovation	Medium Term	LCC

Strategic Theme: Active Spaces and Places					
Strategic Priority	Headline Action/Initiative	Commitments	Values	Timeline	Lead Department/Body
5.Address the need for increased access to high quality indoor and outdoor sport and physical activity facilities and spaces in all parts of County Louth	30. Undertake a comprehensive countywide audit of existing sport and physical activity facilities and places/spaces to inform a needs-led, (<i>gaps/under-utilised assets</i>) evidence-based approach to determine priority areas for investment linked to the LCCP. Description: Using evidence-based data to address the critical shortage of high quality, accessible and affordable indoor and outdoor facilities across County Louth. This can be used to determine gaps in both indoor and outdoor facilities, e.g. insufficient play areas and spaces (playgrounds), swimming pool provision, athletics tracks and soccer pitches.	2, 3, 4, 5, 6	Evidence, Innovation, Collaboration & Partnership	Medium Term	LSP, LCC, GISO
	31. Support the prioritisation of accessible and inclusive spaces in existing facilities to ensure equitable use by all members of the community. Description: Builds stronger, connected communities, and increases participation. Improving access to basic amenities such as toilets, lighting, sanitation and changing facilities.	1, 2, 3, 5, 6	Inclusivity & Equity	Medium Term	LCC, LSP, Schools, Community Facilities
	32. Integrate sustainability, biodiversity climate action, and universal design principles into all new sport and physical activity projects to create resilient, inclusive, and environmentally responsible spaces. Commence in the early planning stages in capital projects. Description: Co-design will meet the needs of the communities they serve, incorporating sustainability aligns with national plans and will open up funding opportunities in conservation of the environment, reducing ASB through community involvement. The aim is to improve the quality of facilities for use by all.	1, 2, 3, 5, 6	Sustainability & Long-term impact, Innovation, Collaboration & Partnership	Ongoing	LCC
	33. Secure upgrades for swimming pools, running tracks, and other facilities across the County Louth while exploring strategies to increase capacity where required. Description: Addresses the need to improve maintenance and quality of facilities.	1, 2, 3, 5, 6	Sustainability & Long-term impact, Innovation, Collaboration & Partnership	Ongoing	LCC
	34. The local authority to assist in the provision of public facilities such as parks/pitches/other community facilities, to address the needs of expanding communities in urban and rural areas across County Louth to facilitate healthy, balanced lives. Description: Feasibility studies based on evidenced data to inform decision-making. Linked to the County Development Plan.				

Strategic Theme: Active Spaces and Places					
Strategic Priority	Headline Action/Initiative	Commitments	Values	Timeline	Lead Department/Body
6.Optimise our existing spaces and places such as community centres, parks, leisure centres, and schools as places where sport, physical activity and recreation can occur	35. Develop supports to address barriers to access and use of school properties outside school hours. Acknowledge and implement the updated guidance on the use of school buildings and sports facilities outside school hours. Description: Encouraging schools to open facilities outside school hours increases community access, supports inclusive participation, and optimises existing infrastructure. Using best practice examples of success stories to stimulate and encourage schools to share resources is more affordable. Reference the new guidelines on the use of school facilities. Reference the new guidelines on the use of school facilities.	1, 2, 3, 5, 6	Collaboration & Partnership, Sustainability & Long-term impact, Innovation	Medium Term	LMETB, School Boards of Management & DOE
	36. Support and create a multi-stakeholder ‘Open Schools’ working group and run a pilot programme with supportive schools. Description: A pilot programme will evaluate the logistics, safeguarding, scheduling, and governance approaches before scaling up countywide.	1, 2, 3, 5, 6	Collaboration & Partnership, Sustainability & Long-term impact, Innovation	Medium Term	LMETB, LCC, LCDC
	37. Capture data to establish baseline supporting evidence to encourage schools to open out-of-hours. Description: Carryout an audit of underutilised school facilities to identify the gaps in infrastructure, areas of need to help persuade the benefits of shared resources.	1, 2, 3, 4,5, 6	Evidence, Collaboration & Partnership, Sustainability and Long-Term Impact	Medium Term	LMETB, LCC, LCDC
	38. Increase the availability and efficient use of existing sporting facilities through shared-use agreements, improved scheduling, and community partnerships to maximise participation opportunities. Description: Maximising the use of existing sporting facilities through shared agreements, scheduling, and partnerships increases participation, promotes inclusion, and strengthens the sustainability and effectiveness of local facilities, initiatives, and programmes.	1, 2, 3,4, 5, 6	Collaboration & Partnership, Sustainability and Long-Term Impact	Medium Term	LMETB, LCC, LCDC
	39. Bring underused facilities, places, and spaces to life by creating inclusive, activity friendly areas through joint initiatives and programmes that make the best use of local facilities. Description: Optimise the use of existing facilities, and create welcoming, inclusive places and spaces that encourage more people to be active on a regular basis, supported by joint initiatives and programmes that make best use of local community assets. Deliver targeted programmes with partners, schools, and community organisations, using low-cost pilots and taster sessions to attract new users.	1, 2, 3,4, 5, 6	Collaboration & Partnership, Sustainability and Long-Term Impact	Medium Term	LCC, Partners

Key Success Measures

1. Expansion of Sport and Physical Activity Spaces
An increase in the number of new sport and physical activity spaces and places developed across County Louth
2. Improvement in access to facilities and reduced waiting lists for sport and physical activities
3. Strategic Planning for Outdoor Recreation
The implementation of a dedicated Outdoor Recreation Strategy and Play Policy to guide investment, access, and sustainable use of outdoor assets through reporting on progress against identified actions.
4. Improved Community Access to School Facilities
A year-on-year increase in the number of schools providing community access to facilities during evenings and weekends.
5. Increased provision of basic amenities (lighting, toilets, changing facilities) at sport and recreation sites.

Active Communications and Partnerships

Why this theme is important?

The consultation process identified a strong opportunity to enhance how sports facilities, recreational opportunities and community initiatives are promoted across County Louth. Improving visibility and communication would significantly increase public awareness, confidence and engagement with existing programmes and spaces.

There is scope to strengthen awareness of the role and impact of the Local Sports Partnership (LSP), alongside greater promotion of existing facilities, trails, and participation programmes. More consistent and accessible communication would help ensure residents are fully informed of the opportunities available to them and supported to take part.

Stakeholders also highlighted the potential to broaden the profile of a wider range of sports, including archery, basketball, and boxing, by better showcasing their inclusivity, local achievements, and community impact. Increasing visibility of these sports alongside mainstream activities such as GAA and soccer would help attract new participants, volunteers, and potential sponsors.

Enhancing communication methods was identified as a key enabler for building trust and showcasing progress. This includes improving digital accessibility across websites and other media platforms. Drawing on evidence to support sport and physical activity decisions and to help partners and stakeholders stay informed of progress, so ongoing participation in research and evaluation activity will help amplify the impact of information and messages relating to sport and physical activity.

A more strategic approach to promotion, supported by targeted marketing campaigns, improved public relations and stronger advertising, would further raise awareness of participation opportunities and local success stories. Promoting local athletes as ambassadors and role models was identified as a particularly effective way to inspire participation and aspiration.

Inclusive communication emerged as a priority, with an emphasis on ensuring information is authentic, respectful, and accessible to all communities. The use of inclusive tools such as QR codes, audio guides, braille, and high-contrast signage can help remove barriers and support equitable access.

More broadly across our Local Sports Plan it also means that internally within Louth County Council, our departments and teams will need to work more closely together, and we will need to collaborate with a wide range of external partners from sports clubs, educational bodies, community and voluntary sector, statutory agencies to National Governing Bodies of Sport. Like all plans with high levels of ambition, it requires the right resources and funding mechanism.

Strategic Theme: Active Communication and Partnerships					
Strategic Priority	Headline Action/Initiative	Commitments	Values	Timeline	Lead Department/Body
7.Enhance the profile and visibility of sport and physical activity, communicate our impact with evidence	40. Implementation of a consistent sport, physical activity, and wellbeing communications strategy across key partners with clear branding and targeted messaging. Description: A more balanced approach for recognising ALL sports across the County, recognising County Louth as a sporting destination available for everyone, everywhere. The aim is to build awareness, pride, and participation. The strategy will improve promotion and awareness of existing programmes and initiatives run by the LSP and other stakeholder bodies using a wider range of media channels.	1, 2, 3, 6	Collaboration & Partnership, Sustainability and Long-Term Impact, Innovation	Ongoing	LCC and LSP
	41. Work with other sports partnerships to support best practice. Description: Focus on working collaboratively with other LSPs to share learning resources and best practice to strengthen programme delivery, avoid duplication and leverage effective approaches to increase participation.	1, 2, 3, 6	Collaboration & Partnership, Sustainability and Long-Term Impact, Innovation	Ongoing	LSP & other LSPs
	42. Continue to Partner with Failte Ireland and Sport Ireland to attract regional/national events. Description: Align with national and regional strategies and to help promote and sustain facilities, initiatives, and programmes. To attract funding opportunities.	1, 2, 3, 6	Collaboration & Partnership, Sustainability and Long-Term Impact, Innovation	Ongoing	Failte Ireland, Sport Ireland, LCC and LSC
	43. Continue to promote and embrace national and international campaigns for sport and physical activity such as Her Moves, Women in Sport, Get Ireland Walking, Bike Week, Men on the Move, National Play Day, and others. Description: Align with national and regional strategies and to help promote and sustain facilities, initiatives, and programmes. To attract funding opportunities.	1, 2, 3, 6	Collaboration & Partnership, Sustainability and Long-Term Impact, Innovation, Inclusivity & Equity	Ongoing	LSP

Strategic Theme: Active Communication and Partnerships					
Strategic Priority	Headline Action/Initiative	Commitments	Values	Timeline	Lead Department/Body
8.Embed effective, accountable, and integrated systems and structures with the right resources to deliver our plan	44. Seek and explore funding for the appointment of a dedicated Sports Officer located within the LSP, as a driving force to coordinate the plan. Description: With support and guidance from the LSP Steering group.	1, 2, 3, 6	Collaboration & Partnership, Sustainability and Long-Term Impact, Innovation	Short term	LCC and LSP
	45. An implementation steering group to be established to lead and coordinate the delivery of the plan. Annually review and track the implementation of the Local Sports Plan actions. Description: To review progress of the plan and to determine the plan is on track and to take remedial action if necessary.	1, 2, 3, 6	Evidence, Collaboration & Partnership	Ongoing	LCC

Strategic Theme: Active Communication and Partnerships					
Strategic Priority	Headline Action/Initiative	Commitments	Values	Timeline	Lead Department/Body
9.Proactively engage and collaborate with a wide range of people and partners in the delivery of our sport and physical activity priorities	46. Optimise existing structures such as the PPN, CYPSC, LCDC to ensure consultation, engagement and information sharing in the development and delivery of major sport and physical activity initiatives. Description: Strengthen collaboration and information sharing by building on existing community and partnership structures. These networks will be used to support consultation, engagement, and joint delivery of major sport and physical activity initiatives, ensuring alignment with wider community development goals and maximising collective impact.	1, 2, 3, 6	Collaboration & Partnership, Sustainability and Long-Term Impact, Innovation, Inclusivity & Equity	Ongoing	LCC
	47. Align the Local Sports Plan, Outdoor Recreation Plan and Play Policy to ensure these are mutually reinforcing to address underutilisation of urban and outdoor play spaces. Description: Aligned to strategies will improve collaboration and partnership through governance. Increases participation at a local level, encourages use of underused spaces, builds trust and improve confidence regarding safety.	1, 2, 3, 6	Collaboration & Partnership, Sustainability and Long-Term Impact, Innovation, Inclusivity & Equity	Ongoing	LCC
	48. This plan and its partners will create the environment and culture to support clubs and NGBs to develop performance pathways. Description: Work in partnership to align local programmes with regional and national player/athlete development pathways through the key themes and priorities of this Plan. This document reflects that performance remains with clubs and groups via their respective NGBs with support from Louth County Council.	1, 2, 3, 6	Collaboration & Partnership, Sustainability and Long-Term Impact, Innovation, Inclusivity & Equity	Ongoing	NGBs, LCC, Clubs,

Key Success Measures

1. Increased year-on year growth in reach, impressions, and engagement metrics across campaigns
2. Increased and sustained representation of Council departments and external partners in delivering programmes and initiatives; collaborative events and engagements.
3. Positive qualitative feedback captured through annual evaluation on the effectiveness of communications, promotional activity.
4. Increased number of collaborative initiatives delivered with National Governing Bodies, Clubs, Schools, health, and wellbeing partners, third party providers and local community groups.

Appendix 1 – Policies and Strategies

Programme For Government 2025 - Securing Ireland's Future

The 2025 Programme for Government (PFG), Securing Ireland's Future, presents a vision for economic stability, infrastructural development, and administrative efficiency. It includes a commitment to supporting the sporting ecosystem so that more people can participate, reap the benefits of sport, and fulfil their potential – from grassroots right up to high performance level. This aligns closely with the goals of the County Louth Local Sports Plan, which focuses on improving access and engagement in daily physical activity for individuals at all life stages, thereby promoting long-term health and quality of life.

Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework and National Development Plan 2021 - 2030

Project Ireland 2040 aims to create a better, more resilient, and more sustainable future for everyone in Ireland. The National Planning Framework (NPF) and the National Development Plan (NDP) combine to form Project Ireland 2040. The NPF sets the vision and strategy for development, while the NDP provides the investment needed to implement that strategy. The aim of Project Ireland 2040 is to construct an improved Ireland for everyone. By 2040, Ireland's population is expected to grow by around one million people. This growth will require significant expansion in housing, job opportunities, cultural and social amenities, regional connectivity, and environmental sustainability. Project Ireland 2040 is designed to meet these challenges head-on. Our Local Sports Plan aligns with Project Ireland 2040's commitments to enhance sports facilities in Ireland, and to improve air quality and create a clean environment for a healthy society; the growth of active travel opportunities will support progress towards this objective.

National Policy Alignment

National Development Plan 2021-2030:

The National Development Plan sets enhancing sports facilities throughout Ireland as a strategic investment priority and sets specific environmental goals focused on the improvement of air quality and a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions; again, the growth of active travel opportunities in County Louth will support progress towards this goal.

Climate Action Plan 2024 (Cap 2025)

The Climate Action Plan 2024 is the national strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, enhance climate resilience, and transition to a carbon-neutral economy by 2050. The County Louth Local Sports Plan encourages a shift towards a lower-carbon lifestyle, including increased walking, cycling, and public transport use. The growth in active travel opportunities in County Louth through this strategy will support the achievement of the Climate Action Plan's goals for a 50% increase in daily active travel journeys by 2030 and a 25% reduction in daily car journeys. This aligns with County Louth Local Sports Plan's objective to promote physical activity and provide accessible, sustainable options for people to incorporate physical activity into their daily lives.

National Sustainable Mobility Policy 2026-2030

The National Sustainable Mobility Policy sets out a strategic framework to 2030 for active travel (walking and cycling) and public transport journeys to help Ireland meet its climate obligations. In increasing opportunities for active travel, therefore making it easier for people to choose walking, cycling and use public transport daily, the County Louth Local Sports Plan is innately synergised with the purpose of the National Sustainable Mobility Policy. These initiatives aim to support healthier, more sustainable communities, contributing to national targets for at least 500,000 additional daily active travel and public transport journeys and a 10% reduction in kilometres driven by fossil fuelled cars by 2030.

NTA Active Travel Program 2023-2030

The work of the National Transport Authority's Active Travel Programme is underpinned by the aims and objectives set out in the Government's Climate Action Plan 2023. With a goal to increase the level of walking, cycling and public transport so that these methods of transport will account for 50% of all journeys made by 2030. Projects funded under this Programme are delivered by Local Authorities, evidencing cross-organisational and cross-sectoral synergy with the County Louth Local Sports Plan. By supporting infrastructure that encourages everyday physical activity, both initiatives contribute to healthier lifestyles and more sustainable communities.

National Sport Policy Alignment

National Sports Policy 2018-2027

The National Sports Policy 2018-2027 sets out a strategic vision for sport over a decade, aiming to increase participation, achieve excellence, and improve governance. The policy outlines ambitious targets across key areas including, increasing participation, enhancing

sport excellence, and strengthening capacity within the sector. The Government's National Sports Policy is foundational for our Local Sports Plan development. This asks Local Authorities to develop 'local sports plans' which review needs and set out actions to increase participation locally. Therefore, our County Louth Local Sports Plan serves as a direct mechanism to implement national priorities in sport at a community level, ensuring that the benefits of sport and physical activity are accessible to all.

Sport Ireland Participation Plan 2021 – 2024

The Sport Ireland Participation Plan serves as a strategic framework to promote increased engagement in sport and physical activity across Ireland. The Plan's key pillars – Active People, Active Places, and Active Partnerships – mirror the priorities of a Local Sports Plan, which aims to develop accessible facilities, engage communities, and build collaboration. The Participation Plan has a clear focus on those who have traditionally had fewer opportunities to take part in sport and physical activity. It also reinforces the importance of developing active places and whole system and community approaches to promoting sport and physical activity. These concepts are key to County Louth's new Local Sports Plan.

National Physical Activity Plan 2016-2022

The Get Ireland Active National Physical Activity Plan aimed to increase physical activity levels across the entire population, thereby improving the health and wellbeing of people living in Ireland. Its goal was to create a society that facilitates, promotes, and supports physical activity, encouraging an active lifestyle with less time spent being sedentary. The plan focused on creating increased opportunities for people to be active as part of their everyday lives, removing barriers to participation, enhancing cross-sectoral cooperation at national, local and community levels, and fostering a supportive environment where physical activity becomes normal. The plan also promoted best practices and explored new models of participation to engage more people in physical activity. The overarching target of the Plan was to increase the proportion of the population undertaking regular physical activity by 1% per annum, with the aim being that Irish people will better understand physical activity's health benefits and learn how to be more active in their daily lives. County Louth's Local Sports Plan synergises strongly with this plan's previous aim and will continue to contribute to the achievement of the Plan's aforementioned goals.

Get Ireland Walking 2023-2027

The Get Ireland Walking strategy 2023-2027 builds on a decade of progress and guided by international best practices, sets out an ambitious set of objectives for the next four years, centred around a collaborative partnership approach, aimed at increasing walking participation across Ireland. As the most popular form of physical activity among adults in Ireland, walking plays a key role in promoting health and wellbeing. The strategy seeks to connect local and national policies, engage stakeholders, advocate for safer and more

accessible walking spaces, and measure the impact of its objectives – all with the goal of encouraging people to walk more often. A key focus of the strategy is empowering and supporting people to choose to walk more often, for recreation, transport, and health, as part of their daily lives. This focus is driven by four key goals in creating, active societies; active environments; active people; and active systems.

The development of County Louth's Local Sports Plan directly aligns with the goals of Get Ireland Walking, as both initiatives share a commitment to making physical activity more accessible and increasing participation. By enhancing access and quality of physical activity and sport infrastructure such as walking trails, a Local Sports Plan would play a vital role in supporting and advancing the objectives of Get Ireland Walking.

Sport Ireland Policy on Women in Sport 2019

The Sport Ireland Policy on Women in Sport outlines Sport Ireland's vision where women have an equal opportunity to achieve their full potential, while enjoying a lifelong involvement in sport. Sport Ireland commits to increasing women's sustained involvement in sport as coaches, volunteers, club members, athletes, advocates, leaders, and participants from grassroots to podium. This national vision provides a strong foundation for local action, aligning closely with the goals of County Louth's Local Sports Plan in aiming to increase participation in sport.

Sport Ireland Policy on Participation in Sport by People with Disabilities 2024

The Sport Ireland Policy on Participation in Sport by People with Disabilities commits to the equal treatment of people with disabilities, in participation terms and support to organisations providing opportunities. The policy aims to implement a "Sport for All" approach across all parts of the sports sector to tackle barriers for participation. This commitment aligns with the objectives of the County Louth Local Sports Plan, which also prioritises inclusive access and increasing participation in sport regardless of abilities.

Irish Sports Monitor Report 2024

The ISM is a nationally representative population survey conducted by Sport Ireland (with over 8,500 participants) to track changes in sport and physical activity in Ireland. Key measures monitored by the ISM include sport participation, club membership, volunteering, and event attendance as well as overall physical activity levels. Findings for 2024 showed that 71% of respondents participated in recreational walking in the last 7 days, and 49% of respondents participated in other forms of sport activity in the past 7 days. All popular sports either sustained or grew their number of participants during 2024. Personal exercise remains the most popular activity.

Sports participation declines with age, with few sports like dancing and golf reversing this trend. Sports participation among women in County Louth has been increasing slowly over time, and the participation gap between men and women in sport (which widened in the Covid-19 pandemic period) has decreased in recent years.

Participation in sports and broader physical activity declines among lower socio-economic groups, people with disabilities, those of non-Irish ethnicity, and residents of rural areas. Respondents in each of these population groups were more likely to report sedentary levels of activity.

National Health Policy Alignment

Healthy Ireland, A framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013-2025

Healthy Ireland is a national framework for action aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of the population of Ireland for future generations. The framework is based on an understanding of the factors that influence healthy and wellbeing, and is designed to drive real, measurable change. Healthy Ireland takes a “whole of government” and “whole of society” approach to tackling the issues which lead to negative health outcomes. The Framework offers six priority areas of work, two of which offer clear synergy with our Local Sports Plan: 1) physical activity; and 2) spaces and places for health and wellbeing.

Sharing the Vision: A Mental Health Policy for Everyone 2025-2027

The Policy aims to create positive mental health and wellbeing amongst the Irish population. County Louth’s Local Sports Plan will contribute to this Policy’s objectives as the links between mental health and physical activity are well established. The provision of a range of physical activity opportunities will promote mental resilience.

International Policy Alignment

United National: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The 2030 Agenda serves as a framework for ensuring a sustainable future, encompassing peace and prosperity for both people and the planet. Adopted by all United Nations member states, it consists of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which cover the social, economic, and environmental requirements for a sustainable future. Investing in a more active society through promoting walking, cycling, sport, active recreation, and play can contribute directly to achieving many of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). County Louth is fully committed to the SDGs and this plan, in seeking to inspire regular sport

and physical activity participation, this plan sets out how we can make a meaningful and practical contribution at a local level.

Global Action Plan on Physical Activity (GAPPA) Framework 2018-2030

Worldwide, 1 in 4 adults, and 3 in 4 adolescents (aged 11-17 years), do not currently meet the global recommendations for physical activity set by the World Health Organisation (WHO). Following requests by countries for updated guidance on effective policy actions to increase physical activity at all levels, WHO developed the Global Action Plan on Physical Activity (GAPPA) Framework 2018-2030. The GAPPA Framework emphasises that effective national action to reverse current trends and reduce disparities in physical activity requires a “systems-based” approach with a strategic combination of “upstream” policy actions aimed at improving the social, cultural, economic, and environmental factors that support physical activity, combined with “downstream,” individually focused (educational and informational) approaches. The framework sets out four strategic objectives; Create Active Systems, Create Active Societies, Create Active Environments and Create Active People. These four objectives are supported by 20 policy actions that are universally applicable to all countries.

Regional Policies and Strategies Alignment

Eastern & Midland Regional Assembly: Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (RSES) 2019 – 2031

The primary objective of the Strategy is to support the implementation of Project Ireland 2040 and the economic and climate policies of the Government by providing a long-term strategic planning and economic framework for the region. Drogheda and Dundalk are explicitly identified as ‘Regional Growth Centres’ in the RSES settlement strategy, meaning they are intended to carry a significant share of regional population, jobs growth and investment focus. Commuting services and supply chains naturally extend beyond county boundaries, ensuring planning is coordinated with neighbouring counties. Chapter Nine of the Strategy is titled “Quality of Life” and includes a section on Healthy Placemaking, which seeks to protect and enhance the unique character of places and to facilitate improvements to human wellbeing and quality of life that comes from the interaction of people and their environment. The Strategy advises that a key element of this is to prioritise cycling and walking as alternative modes of transport and recognises the importance of opportunities to be physically active, relating to the goals of the County Louth Local Sports Plan. By improving infrastructure for physical activity, such as sport facilities, both strategies aim to foster healthier, more active communities, enhancing the overall quality of life for residents.

The findings presented in the Irish Sports Monitor show national trends which align, in many cases, with the consultation exercise conducted in County Louth, supporting the

development of the Louth Local Sports Plan and provides a broader view of trends in sporting and physical activity participation nationally.

Louth County Council Corporate Plan 2024-2029

The Louth County Council Corporate Plan outlines the council's strategic vision, to lead the way in sustainability, inclusivity, and quality of life for its citizens. Four of the nine objectives – 'Strengthen Communities through Empowerment and Inclusion;' Tackling Climate Change and Promoting Sustainability; Delivering on Key Infrastructure and Delivering Louth's place in Project Ireland 2040. All four of these objectives align with the County Louth Local Sports Plan to increase participation in sporting activities, improving access, inclusion, and well-being, whilst continuing to develop and encourage sports and physical activity throughout County Louth.

The Louth Age Friendly County Strategy 2026 -2031

The Louth Age Friendly County Strategy is now being developed, with a focus on ensuring public spaces across the county are safe, accessible, and well maintained. It aims to enhance quality of life by supporting older people's health and wellbeing, and to increase their participation in community life in every town and village. Planned actions include creating more age-friendly walking circuits in rural areas, and promoting playful, inclusive approaches to placemaking and environmental design - priorities that closely complement the Local Sports Plan.

Louth County Council Climate Action Plan 2024 –2029

The Louth County Council Climate Action Plan aligns with the Government's National Climate Objective, which seeks to achieve the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy by 2050. The plan aims to create a low carbon and climate resilient County, by delivering and promoting best practice in climate action across County Louth. It also commits to supporting active travel infrastructure and initiatives to encourage more walking and cycling, closely aligning with the goals of the Local Sports Plan strategic themes.

Louth County Play Policy 2026-2031

The Play Policy is currently under development and will focus on targeting three specific groups: 0–12-year-olds; teenagers and to incorporate intergenerational play features over a (ten)-year period, with an emphasis on nature play, risky play, and free play. The Local Sports

Plan directly aligns with the Play Policy and Outdoor Recreation Plan as they both aim to increase participation in physical activity, recognising its wide-ranging benefits for physical activity, and social wellbeing for everyone. The Play Policy will enhance play opportunities in the most accessible and inclusive way throughout County Louth. The Local Sports Plan dovetails on this foundation, promoting lifelong engagement with the outdoors and the benefits of physical activity. Together, these plans contribute to a healthier, more active County Louth.

Louth Tourism Strategy & Action Plan 2026 - 2031

County Louth now has its first dedicated tourism roadmap, setting out seven core aims: strategic collaboration, tourism innovation, sustainable growth, inclusive tourism, a strong 'Legendary Louth' brand, support for tourism enterprises, and encouraging exploration across the whole county. It identifies four priority themes for development: Countryside & Coast, Activities & Recreation, Spiritual & Well-being, and Events & Festivals, each designed to complement and reinforce the Local Sports Plan and its strategic themes.

Dundalk to Carlingford Greenway 2025

The greenway will provide dedicated pedestrian and cycle facilities through the Cooley Peninsula and will reconnect communities by active modes of transport. The provision of a greenway will significantly improve the safety of vulnerable road users on the Peninsula. The greenway connects to the existing Carlingford Lough Greenway, facilitating a continuous cross-border greenway from Dundalk in County Louth to Newry in County Down.

Louth Health Implementation Plan 2018-2022

The Louth County Council Health Implementation Plan placed a strong emphasis on positive mental health and physical activity initiatives. The programmes developed aimed to strengthen skills and capacity within the community and voluntary sectors, while promoting increased and sustainable participation in physical activity to support both physical and mental wellbeing. This approach also focused on expanding access to, and opportunities for, physical activity across the county.

Louth Local Sports Partnership Strategic Plan 2026-2030

The Louth Local Sports Partnership (LSP) Strategic Plan aims to increase participation in sport and physical activity through the delivery of quality programmes, training, and services, while fostering partnerships and promoting inclusiveness. The plan focuses on five key themes: Active Opportunities & Places, Active Partnerships & Supporting Communities, Active Training, Educating & Empowering, Active Capability, Capacity & Communications and Active

Governance & Research. Both this Strategic Plan and the County Louth Local Sports Plan align through their shared goals of promoting inclusive access to sport facilities and increasing participation in physical activity, regardless of ability, to support and promote lifelong involvement in sport.

Carlingford Lough MPA Management Plan

This document sets out a 10-year vision for investment in the region for Carlingford Lough. The vision sets out to develop the Carlingford Lough Region as a model of excellence for activity tourism on the Island of Ireland. Carlingford Lough is surrounded by the Mourne Mountains. The plan outlines how investment in tourism will shape the region, with main considerations including new facilities and attractions, infrastructure projects, integrating tourism products, and enhancing the accommodation offer.

County Louth Volunteering Framework 2021 - 2025

This framework is aligned to the National Volunteering Strategy 2021 – 2025, with objectives to: increase participation and diversity while embracing new trends and innovation; develop and support the volunteering environment to contribute to vibrant and sustainable communities; recognise, celebrate and communicate the value of and impact of volunteers and volunteering in all forms; promote ethical and skills-based international volunteering and to improve policy coherence on volunteering across government, both nationally and locally. The Local Sports Plan will adopt closely aligned objectives for volunteers countywide.



Participation



Activity



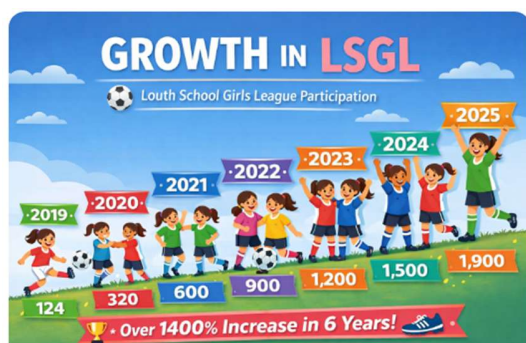
Inclusion



Fitness

Appendix 2 Local Sports Partnership

Key Headlines



Appendix 3 Glossary of Terms

Terms and Acronyms Explanation

Active Lifestyles	An active lifestyle refers to a way of living that involves regular physical activity, exercise, and movement as a fundamental part of daily routines and recreational choices. It encompasses activities that promote overall health, fitness, and wellbeing, often including exercises, sports, outdoor pursuits, and active transportation. The aim is to maintain or improve physical health, mental wellbeing, and quality of life through consistent engagement in movement and physical pursuits.
Active Travel	Active Travel involves travelling with a purpose, using your own energy via sustainable means. It includes walking, wheeling, and cycling or the use of self-powered, non-motorised scooters as part of a purposeful journey. For example, walking to school and cycling to work are both considered forms of Active Travel.
CORC	A multi-agency partnership group that supports the development, management, and promotion of outdoor recreation opportunities within County Louth, ensuring sustainable access to natural amenities.
Faillte Ireland	Ireland's National Tourism Development Authority, responsible for supporting and developing tourism, including the promotion of recreational assets, greenways, and activity-based tourism.
GISO	An officer role supporting inclusion and participation in sport and physical activity.
HSE	Ireland's public health service provider, responsible for delivering health and wellbeing initiatives, including programmes that promote physical activity and healthy lifestyles.
LCC	Louth County Council.
LCDC	A statutory committee that coordinates, plans, and oversees local and community development funding and initiatives at county level.
LMETB	The statutory authority responsible for education and training services across Louth and Meath, including schools, further education, and community education programmes that support youth and lifelong participation in sport and physical activity.
LSP	Local Sports Partnership.
NPF	The National Planning Framework (NPF) is Ireland's long-term strategic planning document that guides development and growth at a national, regional, and local level. It sets out how the country will accommodate population growth, support economic

	development, protect the environment, and ensure balanced regional development up to 2040.
NGB	National Governing Body: the controlling organisation of a sport. For example, the GAA or Cycling Ireland.
Outscape NI	An organisation supporting outdoor recreation development and cross-border collaboration, particularly in relation to trail development, greenways, and shared natural assets.
Partners	Public, private, voluntary, and community sector organisations that collaborate with Louth County Council and relevant stakeholders to support the delivery of sport and physical activity initiatives.
PFG	The Programme for Government (PFG) is an agreed policy framework developed by the parties forming the Government. It sets out the Government's priorities, commitments, and key actions for its term in office. The PFG outlines strategic objectives across areas such as the economy, health, education, climate action, housing, and community development, and provides a roadmap for how these goals will be delivered.
Physical Activity	Physical activity refers to any bodily movement that results in energy expenditure. It encompasses a wide range of actions, from everyday activities like walking, climbing stairs, and household chores, to planned exercises, sports, and recreational pursuits.
Sport	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.
Sport Ireland	The national statutory body responsible for the development of sport in Ireland, including high-performance sport, participation programmes, funding, and support for Local Sports Partnerships.

Partner and funder Logos to
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