

Coiste Átha Cliath

Presentation to Croke Park **15th April 2008**

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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to set out a strategic plan that will build on the strengths of the current Dublin GAA family and focus the organisation on meeting the challenges identified in the Strategic Review. These challenges identified in 2002 have been magnified by the so-called success of the Tiger Economy and may now be significantly impacted by the apparent downturn in the economy.

Any strategic plan however must be consistent with our core values and growth at any cost would not be in the long term interests of the association. The core values identified by the strategic review must be our bible and all strategic/tactical initiatives must be grounded in those core values.

The core values are listed below

- Inclusive Organisation
- Voluntary Ethos
- Community Based Organisation with a Family Focus
- Games for All
- Foster a sense of Irish Identity
- Protection of the individual

These core values need to be translated into a management framework that will facilitate a rigorous examination of initiatives. The difficulty of the core values, while enjoying universal buy in, is that within modern society some of the values may not exist within the same location. This point is best illustrated in the conflict that can arise between a strategy which has “games for all” value at its core and the values of community and volunteerism. An example of the issues raised by this is that in various parts of Dublin no coherent community exists and tactical responses to raise the profile of GAA by establishing nurseries and by establishing other games structures (on the green, mega touch) must be seen as having a defined period of trial and unless the result is a community based organisation, i.e. a club, evolving then an exit strategy must exist.

The management rigour is best devised by relating all activities to the two basic units of the organisation club/county. In overall terms our strategic initiatives can be broken into three categories; - (a) Club Development (b) Elite Player Initiatives/Inter County Teams and (c) Facilities & Training.

Club Development Strategies

These strategies are best described as push strategies where the objective is to generate activity on the ground with the aim of facilitating and generating the maximum number of participants in the largest demographic unit within the organisation. This will be our number one priority with a focus on strategies that will lead to a lifelong involvement

with the GAA and generating the emotional attachment to the organisation that this facilitates. A games program strategy together with a program of initiatives that will generate club development are central to this objective. The management rigour for these initiatives can best be addressed by establishing a list of criteria which each can be tested against.

Current Clubs

Does the strategy complement and add value to current club activities

- Playing Members
- Mentor Recruitment
- Games Program
- Community Identity

Can the initiative be carried out while retaining our volunteer ethos?

- Facilitation of Voluntary Control
- Management Systems which reflect Volunteer Control
- No Payment for playing or management of Teams

Will the initiative facilitate the broadest involvement within the community?

- No Gender Bias
- Pathway for Non Traditional GAA Personnel
- No Racial Bias

New Clubs

Any new club strategy should focus on the following questions while at the same time being judged against the management criteria identified above.

Has the initiative identified the need for a new club?

Is there a written plan as to the methodology for the evolution of the new club?

Is there a timeline for critical success factors?

Is there a timeline for validation that it will fit the specification of a volunteer led club with a community/family focus?

What is the exit strategy if it cannot comply with this requirement?

In essence the impact of the above is that we will have GAA activity where the community has a desire for that activity, we will try to generate that desire by reshaping our traditional models and becoming a social anchor for people and communities but we will not move to a model which compromises on that sense of place which is identified as a unique GAA feature. In many ways this can be best illustrated by the statement “we will be a table d’hôte rather than an á la carte menu”

Elite Player Initiatives/Inter County Teams

The competitive market place that the GAA operates in is becoming more complex with increasing global factors influencing activity within the country. Currently our games are the number one spectator sport and the continuation of this cannot be taken for granted

and we must have the appropriate plans to ensure our position is preserved. The attractiveness of our games at elite level is essential for the long term success of our organization and depends on the revenues necessary to implement all our plans. Dublin because of its population base is a key driver in delivering these revenues and faces competition from both rugby and soccer in the components that are necessary for the delivery of these revenues. However revenue generation is not the only benefit from these activities but there is significant opportunity through push strategies to deliver greater playing numbers at club level.

Dublin football is a significant flagship for the county board and generates sizeable revenues for the entire organization. Within the county considerable competition exists for elite players and an attractive environment is necessary for these players to engage in GAA activity. Hurling, which in many ways has been the Cinderella game for elite players within Dublin, presents the best opportunity to grow revenues and present another platform which elite players can aspire to. The benefits for Dublin developing into a genuine Tier One hurling county cannot be underestimated and it is reasonable to assume that success for Dublin at national level would do for hurling what the 70's team did for football and drive activity in a number of counties.

However all initiatives in this area must still address our core values and the criteria are listed below.

Conflict with Club Activity

- Club Games

Playing Standards

Player Burnout

Number of Players

Number of Participating Clubs

Volunteer Ethos

Facilities

The GAA has the capability of delivering the first two components but the cost of the provision of playing facilities in Dublin is beyond the financial capacity of the organization. The cost of the acquisition of the land for one adult pitch in Dublin could be between 6m Euro and 40m Euro depending on location. The majority of the land which will become available for sporting purposes in the future will be controlled by Local Authorities who have a multi-sport culture and see our Association but one of the many customers they have to satisfy. The customers for the Local Authorities are not only our

traditional competitors but the perceived need to treat as our equal the need for passive recreation such as walkways and other aesthetic needs e.g. ponds.

The engagement on a pro-active basis with the Local Authorities is seen as an enablement strategy without which we will not have the playing facilities to host our games. The challenges to our core values maybe greatest in this area and as an organization routed in the community with an Irish identity will require the greatest compromise as we share facilities with organizations that may have very different values. The management rigor concerning this area will be of a more financial basis due to our lack of control on delivery, but a number of internal criteria have been established:-

Volunteer Control
Club Buy In

Training

Essential to our ethos of volunteerism is that our organization can demonstrate a welcoming approach to people who have no tradition of GAA. This is best achieved by having a comprehensive training program which will empower volunteers and allow volunteers achieve a high degree of technical competence through a structured coaching path. Our strategic training plan is to drive Award 1 training and CDP's courses by up-skilling our GPO staff and to provide a structured program of Award 2 and 3 courses in the county.

The criteria which this should be judged against

Ease of access to volunteers
Attractiveness to volunteers
Quality

Club Development – GPO/Coaching Assistance

The foundation of the Association is our clubs and the most pressing requirement is that we have a comprehensive structure in place that will allow clubs survive and grow in an environment where people are time poor. Support for this volunteer base is critical and the deployment of Games Promotion Officers has been essential to this task. In the period 2003 to 2008 the number of teams catered for in a weekly structured juvenile games program (under 8 to 16) has risen from 618 teams to 1300 teams. This growth in teams has seen football numbers growing from 8,204 to 11,356 and hurling from 3,960 to 7,257 in the same period. A number of factors have contributed to this growth including the extension of structured games program to 8's and 9's. These figures demonstrably show that we have seen a significant rise in mentors in the period in question and relate only to the growth in male activity.

Tactically this growth has been enabled by the significant resources invested in nurseries by both club and county personnel with a total of 6,004 children attending in different clubs across the county. Breakdowns of all the figures involved by team within club are included in attachment A.

Some clubs have underperformed in this area. Many factors contribute to this underperformance including demographics, number of clubs within an area and quality of volunteers and survival maybe the first prerequisite. It is proposed that each RDO will identify two underperforming clubs and prepare a detailed engagement plan with the club.

Nurseries are the entry mechanism in Dublin for most volunteers who have no GAA background. Children are attracted by the fun environment that exists within the nursery and their parents are induced to become involved by engaging in simple tasks that require little or no previous experience. Volunteers are then introduced gently to the GAA world and the capacity to deliver foundation courses at club level by a GPO who has been a constant in their growing relationship with the club is a considerable resource. A total of 4,132 attended foundation training delivered during the period 2003 to 2008.

In many instances the family engagement with the club is driven by the child's desire to participate in the GAA. One of the principal functions of the GPO is to generate that desire by primary school children through school visits. A total of 42,112 children took part in school GPO/coaching assistance programs in 2005 and a total of 30,950 in the period Sept 2007 to March 2008. The introduction of paid personnel into clubs is a challenge to our core values but that is a challenge we should face rather than leave the future of clubs to a dwindling number of historical volunteers, within the educational system, who have served the Association so well in the past. The Dublin County Board believes that the day to day operation of the GPO scheme must be controlled by the volunteers within the club. The County Board will set broad guidelines for GPO activity to ensure that the running of the club and the prime responsibility for the training and management of teams stay within the remit of volunteers but the voluntary management

structure in the clubs will set the targets for the GPO and agree the day to day programs to meet those targets.

The figures outlined above show the capacity to generate both players and mentors within Dublin but unless attractive programs of games are available that engagement will be short-lived. In 2005 the Dublin County Board decided that all games between the ages of 8 and 12 would be played under the Go-Games format. Considerable resistance was encountered but three years later it is generally accepted that the current format is the correct way to proceed. See Attachment B for full juvenile program.

The proposed GPO/coaching assistance by club is contained in Attachment C.

Assessment of above initiative against management criteria outlined in Introduction

Criteria	Success Factors
Playing Members	Growth 2003 to 2008 in playing numbers
Mentor Recruitment	Growth in Teams
Games Program	Adoption of Go Games
Community Identity	School Link
Facilitation of Voluntary Control	Control of GPO day to day activities
Management Systems	Steering Committees
No Payment for playing or managing teams	County Board guidelines
No Gender Bias	All school children
Pathway for non traditional GAA personnel	Nurseries/Foundation Programs
No Racial Bias	All school children

Club Development New Clubs

There have been a number of successes over the last five years in establishing new juvenile clubs within the county. The majority of new juvenile clubs have come from clubs who traditionally had an adult structure but have come to the view that their future lies in developing the club from the nursery up. Listed below is a table of the new clubs formed.

Club	Juvenile	Teams	Comments
	2003	2008	
Ballyfermot /DLS	0	5	Socially Disadvantaged – Poor GAA Demographics
Stars of Erin	0	1	Small County Club with an expanding population base
Erin Go Bragh	0	10	Large new developments around Clonee
Westmanstown Gaels	0	6	Senior Club Garda Strong Demographics
Na Dubh Ghall	1	12	Working Class Soccer area – majority of mentors ex soccer- with an expanding population
Wild Geese	0	3	North County Juvenile hurling – amalgam of small football clubs

These successes have been sporadic and it is proposed to have a more systematic approach over the next three years. Four different models have been identified and the Games Manager will take overall responsibility for the development of the models and an on-going evaluation which will lead to clearly identified systems and a review of success factors.

A single GPO will assist the Games Manager in this task. The four different models are listed below with the proposed location, the different attributes and challenges that exist in each location.

Model One

Development of a Current Club

Location

Ballyfermot

Attributes

The area is a Rapid One area with little GAA history and is seen as a predominately soccer environment. However some signs that a group of volunteers are available – 140 in an Easter Camp.

Challenges

To develop a cohesive management structure and to translate camp activity into teams, In addition to build the financial structures necessary – current view within the club is that €15 is the maximum that can be charged for Cul Camps.

Model Two

Chapel of Ease

Location

Shankill

Attributes

Significant population base but scattered gun approach to playing with GAA clubs. Area is surrounded by a number of mega clubs and difficult to grow a new club in their shadow. Population will expand significantly over the next ten years and the area is mainly middle class.

Challenges

To develop a strategic agreement with a current club that will form an independent nursery and self contained teams up to under 12. The desired outcome would be a sense of community would develop around the GAA activity and split into a separate club over a number of years e.g. Castleknock.

Model Three

New volunteer club

Location

Adamstown

Attributes

Small current population base but will grow to large numbers over the next 10 years. A considerable resource exists in one individual volunteer who is driving the project forward. A large current club exists close to the area.

Challenges

To harness the current resource but to ensure that the club is viable and a management structure exists if the current individual departed the club.

Model Four

Force Feed Club

Location

Tyrellstown

Attributes

A large population base exists which has with very little GAA background. The demographics are extremely difficult with a high percentage of rented dwellings and the local school has a 93% enrollment of children with parents who are non Irish national. No demand for GAA activity from population but considerable support from local teachers, businessmen and local authority.

Challenges

Can a GAA club be generated through a supply chain model rather than a demand model. To build the demand within the area complemented by a group of volunteers who will manage the club.

Assessment of above initiative against management criteria outlined in Introduction will be developed over a three year period.

Criteria	Success Factors – Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Playing Members	Establishment of Nursery	Under 8 Team	Under 8 & 9 team
Mentor Recruitment	1 Parent volunteer to every 10 children	Volunteer Run	Volunteer Run
Games Program	Internal	Will Facilitate small numbers	Will Facilitate small numbers
Community Identity	School Link	School Link	School Link
Facilitation of Voluntary Control	Juvenile Committee	Management Committee Structure	Management Committee Structure
Management Systems	Juvenile Committee	CC1 Attendance	CC1 Attendance
No Payment for playing or managing teams	County Board guidelines	County Board guidelines	County Board guidelines
No Gender Bias	All school children		
Pathway for non traditional GAA personnel	Nurseries/ Fundamentals CDPD	Award One	Award One
No Racial Bias	All school children		

The success of this program together with the under performing clubs is critical to the future and it is proposed that a group be established to monitor progress on these issues. This group should have a single focus and be drawn from Croke Park/Leinster and Dublin and comprise both professional and volunteer personnel.

Football Schools of Excellence

The lure of the Dublin football jersey is a considerable asset for all stakeholders within the GAA family, it drives participation within Dublin, national media exposure and revenues for the entire Association. Success at under age within Dublin had been disappointing and the product offering to elite players was seen as inferior to competing codes.

In 2005 the operation of the schools of excellence were reviewed in Dublin and a number of changes were implemented. The main drivers for the change were the need to increase the number of participants and ensure a better quality of the mentor operating within the system. The need to increase the numbers satisfied the additional requirement of access to all clubs and was deemed critical to enabling smaller clubs retaining their best players.

In 2006 the number of development squads was increased at 14 and 15 to three and an introductory operation was put in place at under 13. A wide ranging consultation took place with potential mentors and a significant obstacle for high quality candidates becoming involved was the amount of administration work that was entailed. In many cases the top coaches were also involved at club level. A football development officer was employed to supplement the volunteer coaches but would not take a role in managing and coaching teams. It is proposed that this system continue but football mentors see a perceived bias to hurling and representations maybe made to increase the attractiveness of the package for players.

Criteria	Success Factors
Club Games	Agreed schedule between Football Officer & CCC
Playing Standards	Successful sourcing of quality mentors
Player Burnout	Sessions skill based no physical training – Only one code at 16 and 17
No. of Players Involved	Increased to 435 players
No. of Participation Clubs	55 from 72 Clubs 76% In Schools of Excellence
Volunteer Ethos	All Mentors in a Volunteer Capacity

Hurling

The changes in Dublin Hurling structures have been significant over the last number of years. The changes in the football academy were first implemented in hurling in 2005. The rationale for those changes have been outlined above.

The hurling community however has embraced a wider range of changes which have increased the capacity of Dublin hurling to compete at a Tier 1 level. From 2009 Dublin Colleges will have two teams competing at each grade within Leinster. In addition the Senior Championship has been revamped to include regional teams which allow access to

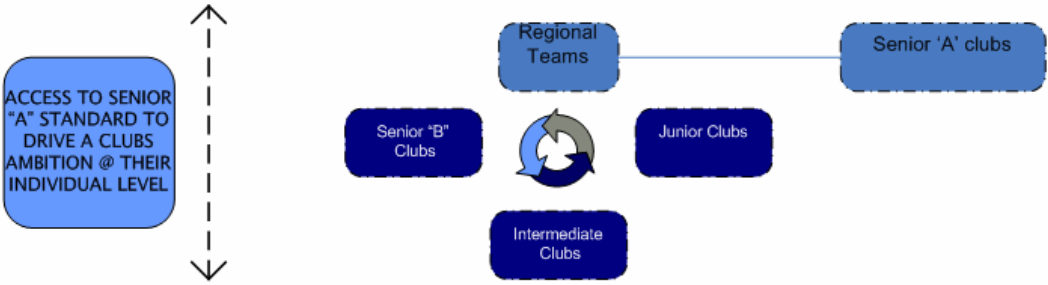
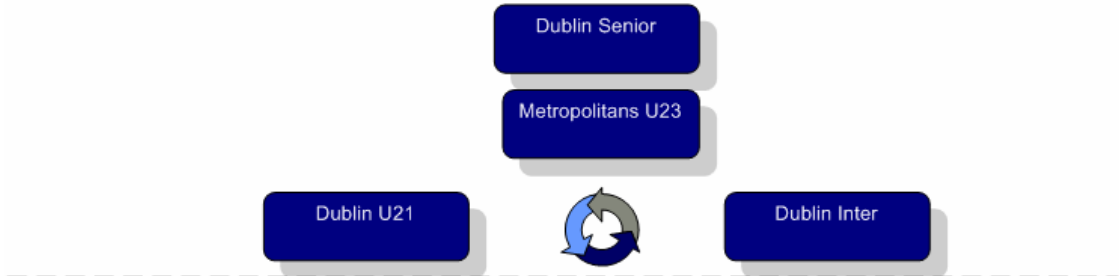
a higher level of hurling for all the best players. These initiatives have resulted in a significant increase in the number of players who have the potential to play at inter county level. Currently a total of 78 players are involved in collective training for the senior and under 21 teams. The Dublin County Board now requires an access for this group of players to have access to top class hurling. It is proposed that Dublin enter a second team for the under 23 age group in the National League and Championship at Christy Ring level. Included below are the different components of our hurling strategy in a diagram format which should be seen as a single integrated approach rather than separate initiatives.

Fingal’s entry into the Nicky Rackard Cup is a welcome development and allows a Local Authority response and focus. However it should be recognized that this is not part of the core standards focused strategy.

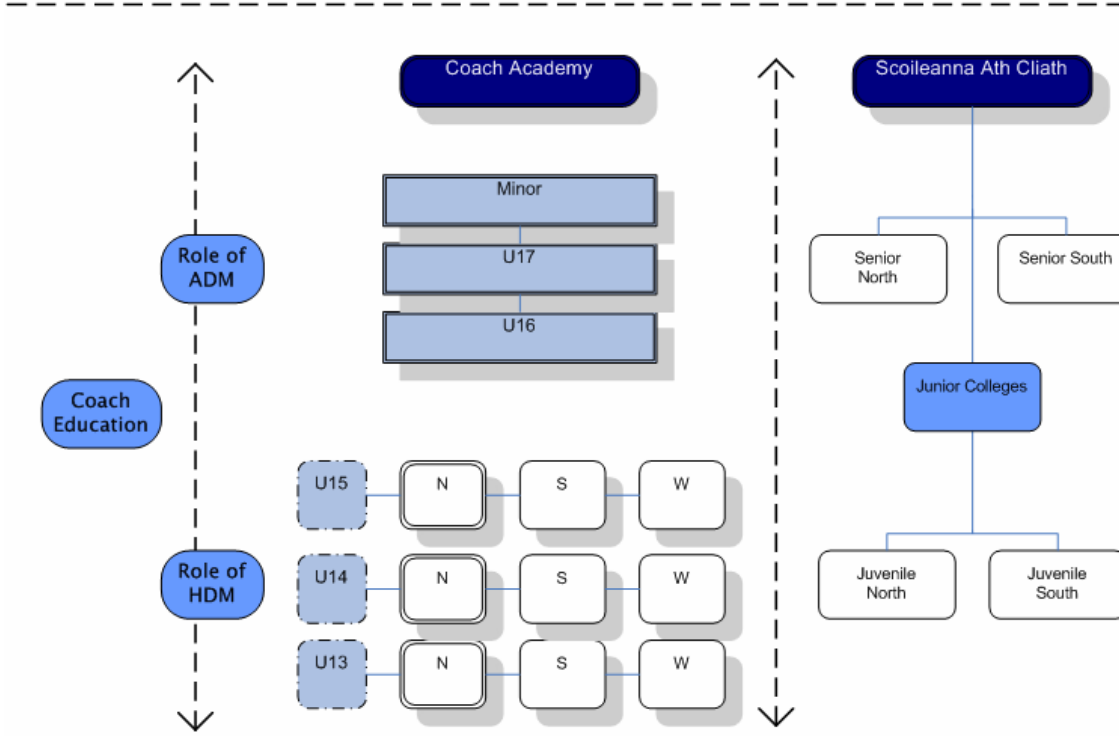
It is proposed that a volunteer Director of Hurling be appointed to oversee the full implementation of the integrated strategy. This appointment should come from a high performance background. In addition it is proposed to request the Friends of Dublin Hurling to provide funding of 3 scholarships per year up to maximum of 12 over a four year period. The games program for these players would have a club/county focus and be agreed with the Adult Hurling Manager

Criteria	Success Factors
Club Games	Agreed schedule between Hurling Officers & CCC
Playing Standards	Successful sourcing of quality mentors
Player Burnout	Sessions skill based no physical training – Only one code at 16 and 17
No. of Players Involved	Schools of Excellence 400 players Colleges 150 players Senior and under 21 78 players
No. of Participation Clubs	41 out of 43 Team (95%) represented in Schools of Excellence
Volunteer Ethos	Director of Hurling/ All Mentors in a Volunteer Capacity

DUBLIN HURLING: BUILDING THE BRIDGEHEAD TO SUCCESS



ACCESS TO SENIOR "A" STANDARD TO DRIVE A CLUBS AMBITION @ THEIR INDIVIDUAL LEVEL



Club Underage & School Activity

Facilities

The increased relevance of Local Authorities is most clearly demonstrated in the facilities required for the further growth of our games. Due to the escalating cost of land the purchase of club land is beyond the financial capacity of most clubs. Indeed several threats exist that even current playing facilities may be threatened where the lands are owned by different entities that may monetise those assets. In one instance the Local Authority is seeking to purchase lands traditionally used to play GAA games to convert to a local park with no guarantee of GAA playing pitches.

Our future will not be in our own hands but rather in our capacity to influence at Local Authority level. Developers in most areas are now required to give the recreational land to the Local Authorities rather than individual sports. All Local Authorities see the use of these lands in a much broader picture than solely active recreational use and as a result see the active areas catering for multi-sport solutions. In January 2007 the Dublin County Board piloted an engagement process with DunLaoghaire/Rathdown. The key component of that process would be that it would be centrally led but locally controlled. Numerous meetings were held between the Club Chairmen, Strategic Program Manager and the RDO to develop a facilities agenda within the county. The Local Authority engaged in the process and minutes were agreed, distributed to the club chairmen followed by meetings to review strategy for the next meeting with the local authority. It is proposed that this strategy be rolled out to the other local authorities at a local area management level. This is a labour intensive strategy with negotiating skills the core competency. The results of the local area meetings would then be rolled up to a yearly meeting at county manager level. The function would be staffed by one person who would draw on the expertise of the RDO's. A more detailed proposal is included in the attached PowerPoint presentation.

Criteria	Success Factors
Volunteer Control	Local Club Chairmen Steering Committee
Club Buy In	Management Systems/ Regular Meetings/ Agreed Minutes

Training

The training strategy will have a number of objectives this year which are listed below

Full Time Staff –

Award 1 - Tutor Training National Model

Code of Best Practice

Population 60

Class size 15

Days per Class 6

Total Days Training 24

Games Manager responsible for scheduling, preparation and sourcing of master tutors

Followed up by a formal mentoring visit – 30 days – 5 master tutors

Continuous Professional Development for New Staff – 6 core modules

L2 Program – Award 3

10 in Hurling

10 in Football

Only Development Squad coaches

L1 Program Tutor Program – Award 2

6 Football Tutors

6 Hurling Tutors

Galway Program

8 days

L1 Courses – Award 2

2 in Football

2 in Hurling

These objectives focus more on the award level programs than the various CDP modules which were run in previous years centrally. The CDP modules will be run at a club level by GPO's to facilitate ease of access.

Criteria	Success Factors
Attractiveness to Volunteers	Graduated Program from Nursery to Award1 ,2 and 3 Levels
Ease of Access to Volunteers	Capacity to deliver up to Award 1 and CDP modules at club level L1 Courses in 4 Different Clubs

Management Structure

