



Ardú Bhéal Feirste



Cumann Lúthchleas Gael
Bhéal Feirste



A Plan for the GAA
Across Ireland's Second City
2009-2014





Réamhrá: An Uachtaráin

Belfast is, rightly, one of the Ulster GAA Council's most urgent development priorities. Ulster and Ireland are becoming increasingly urbanised and the GAA Action Plan and Vision launched in November 2008 emphasised the need for the GAA to address in strategic ways the wellbeing of our games and pastimes in those growing urban centres. In Ulster we have in Belfast and Derry the second and fourth largest urban areas in Ireland. Our main urban pilot project to date, in Derry city, now serves as a best practice model as to how the GAA can be revived and successfully developed in an urban context. We hope to apply many of those lessons in Belfast.

The Ulster Council in conjunction with both the Antrim and Down County GAA Committees started the strategic planning process for the GAA in Belfast early in 2008. Since then we have consulted with a wide range of GAA members and other stakeholders and carried out various analyses of the “state-of-GAA-play” in the city. That work has produced the strategic themes and actions contained in this plan.

As Ireland's second city and Ulster's largest urban area Belfast is of key strategic importance to the GAA. It has a strong and proud GAA history, one of success and above all of commitment, often against odds and in circumstances not experienced by GAA

communities anywhere else in Ireland. I am confident that with the implementation of this strategy the GAA in Belfast will be strong again and will act as a flagship for the GAA in our Province. “Belfast Rising” is our aim as well as the title for our strategy.

I am thankful to the Belfast Strategic Planning group for all their hard work, willingly given on a voluntary basis. My particular thanks go to their Chairman Jim Murray and Secretary Ryan Feeney who were supported by Frankie Quinn, Sean Óg McAteer and Mark Conway in the strategic planning process.

The Ulster GAA Council is committed to supporting the Antrim and Down County GAA Committees and the GAA Clubs and other units across the city in the implementation of this plan. We will also seek support from the national GAA and will of course work closely with many other stakeholders outside the immediate GAA family. I am confident that the development of this strategy is the first step on the road to a risen Belfast.

Beir Bua

Tom Daly
President
Ulster GAA



“Ardú Bhéal Feirste” Vision

“To see gaelic games and culture making a visible and tangible contribution to community; sporting; social and economic life in Ireland's second city”

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Cumann Lúthchleas Gael
Bhéal Feirste



Chairman's Foreword

It is with great pleasure that I introduce this strategic plan for the future of Gaelic Sport in Belfast. It will give us all a focus on what is important in the way we organise our administration to give the best opportunity to all our member's, our Clubs and schools in the greater Belfast area in the years to come.

The GAA in Belfast is strong and working well to meet the challenges posed today, but we need to ensure that we have in place modern plans and thinking to ensure that the GAA in Belfast progresses and grows to meet our membership's needs. This strategy will ensure we have in place strategic plans and thinking for us to move forward in a confident and focused manner. With a population of some 580,000 the Belfast Urban Area is easily Ireland's second largest city. It runs across six local government Districts and in GAA terms is split between Counties Antrim and Down.

We want to set down our plans for the Future. The need for such a strategy was highlighted in the strategic plans developed by both Comhairle Uladh ("Beir Bua Nua") and Coiste Aontroma ("Lean ar Aghaidh") future and set targets that we will achieve. The Belfast Strategic plan is fully supported by the Association and will run in parallel with the strategic thinking and current strategic plans developed by Comhairle Uladh and Coiste Aontroma.

As a city, Belfast:

- Is the key economic; commercial; and political/administrative driver of much of the north-east of Ireland
- Hosts a number of vibrant cultural activities
- Experiences some of the most acute levels of deprivation to be found anywhere in Ireland
- Was the scene of the worst of the NI conflict
- Is, in many places acutely segregated
- Is subject to a variety of regeneration initiatives

In GAA terms, Belfast:

- Is home to some of the Association's strongest units, including a number of new and very vibrant Clubs
- Simultaneously has large areas where GAA activity is minimal
- Is the location of one of the GAA's iconic stadia, Casement Park
- Has severe deficits in terms of the infrastructure needed to facilitate gaelic games

- Promotes and delivers both football and hurling
- Hosts much of Ulster's Third level GAA activity.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the membership of the Belfast Strategic Workgroup, supported by Ryan Feeney, Frankie Quinn, Sean Óg McAteer, Mark Conway and the staff of Comhairle Uladh, who worked so tirelessly to produce this plan. I would also like to thank all the Schools, Clubs and members of our association for their input in producing this plan.

A big task lies ahead. I look forward to your support in delivering on it. The hard work begins now.

Jim Murray
Chairman, Belfast Strategic Planning Workgroup



Foreword by Chairmen of the Antrim and Down County Committees

Covering two counties and consisting of a population of nearly 600,000 Belfast is now a growing and vibrant city, Clubs from both Counties have proudly represented the City over the years and the GAA tradition in the city is as strong as ever. The development of this plan gives us an opportunity to expand our GAA provision and support our Club volunteers in all their work.

The new "Belfast GAA" brand will give us the opportunity to better market our games and activities across the city and both County Boards look forward to working in together in partnership to increase the GAA provision in the city.

We would like to express our thanks to Jim Murray and the Belfast Strategy Group for their work over the past year and look forward to the full implementation of this strategy over the coming years.

John McSparran
Chairman, Antrim County Committee

Kevin Bell
Chairman, Down County Committee

What "Ardú Bhéal Feirste" will Deliver:



Coaching, Games and Participation

- At least 10 GAA Community Coaches for the Belfast Urban Area
- An increase in games participation of at least 20% by 2014
- A specific Belfast Continuing Professional Development programme for volunteer club coaches
- Cross Club summer and Easter coaching camps
- City Based Development Squads
- Enhanced Club-School links through new coaching initiatives and programmes
- Programmes to attract new participations who traditionally would have no involvement in the GAA.

Physical Development

- Belfast GAA Urban Centre of Participation and Excellence that includes at least three new full-size pitches for club use in North and West Belfast
- At least two new full-size GAA pitches for use in the South and East Belfast
- Redevelopment of Casement Park to an appropriate standard for the main GAA stadium in Ireland's second city.

Club Governance

- New group comprising of Belfast GAA club officials, Antrim, Down and Ulster GAA officials to drive the development of the GAA in Belfast
- At least two Development Officers to support Club officials in administration governance and ongoing club development
- A new Brand and Identity for the GAA in Belfast
- A "joined-up" club led approach to the overall development of the GAA in the City
- A strong GAA presence and linkage with all local government and relevant public bodies in the city.
- Specific Belfast GAA Club Development Seminars and Volunteer training events.

Culture and Heritage

- Revival of Scór in the City
- Introduction of new Specific Belfast GAA Irish language Courses
- Development of a Belfast GAA History.



Executive Summary

With a population now heading towards 580,000, Belfast is, by a long way, Ireland's second city. Along with Dublin, it now forms a corridor which is increasingly significant in Ireland's social and economic life. Belfast however is not one of Ireland's oldest places, having really sprung to prominence in the later 19th Century. Its robust industrial base made it unique in Ireland, providing its own special landscape and culture.

During the 20th Century Belfast declined as an industrial power and began to experience the classic symptoms of urban decay. The onset of open political and community conflict from the late 1960s affected every aspect of life in the city and created legacies which still persist. These include huge population movements; a clear sectarian geography; and widespread and acute deprivation and disadvantage.

The city meanwhile developed its own gaelic traditions and over the years influenced Irish cultural and political thinking. In GAA terms it is split between the Antrim and Down County Committees, though 23 of its 26 GAA Clubs are affiliated to Antrim. Most of its Clubs lack playing facilities though unlike the position across much of Ireland, most also promote both football and hurling. The city is also home to the GAA's iconic Casement Park as well as three powerful presences in the GAA's third level scene, Queen's University; St Mary's University College; and the University of Ulster at Jordanstown.

"Ardú Bhéal Feirste" reflects the priority placed on urban GAA development at both the central and Ulster GAA levels. It focuses on issues and solutions specific to Belfast and does not replicate the plans and strategies put in place by the Antrim and Down County Committees; by the Ulster Council; or by CAU (Third Level).

The plan has identified six themes as being central to the betterment of the GAA across the city. These are:

- Organisation, Management, Awareness and Development: branding "Belfast GAA"; providing a focus on city-wide GAA issues and developing the partnerships needed to address them
- Club, Community and Volunteer Wellbeing: supporting Clubs as the engines of the GAA in the city

- Participation, Coaching and Games Development: resourcing the coaching needed to bring participation in gaelic games to new levels
- "Including Others" Diversity and Inclusion: spreading awareness of and involvement in the GAA to "non-traditional" places and communities
- Culture, Arts and Language: contributing to and building on Belfast's strong Irish cultural heritage
- Physical Development and Provision: improving the numbers and quality of places across Belfast where gaelic games can be developed and played.

Belfast provides a series of unique challenges to the GAA. But equally the GAA offers the city a very powerful community-based and volunteer-driven package which can help address its many legacies and dilemmas. By working together the city and the GAA can deliver huge mutual benefits.



GAA Mission

"The GAA is a community based volunteer organisation promoting gaelic games, culture and lifelong participation. The GAA is a volunteer organisation. We develop and promote Gaelic Games at the core of Irish Identity and culture. We are dedicated to ensuring that our family of games, and the values we live, enrich the lives of our members, families and the whole communities, which we serve. We are committed to active lifelong participation for all, and to providing the best facilities. We reach out to and include all the members of our society. We promote individual development and well-being, and strive to enable all our members to achieve their full potential in their chosen role."

The GAA Strategic Vision and Action Plan 2009-2015

Ulster GAA Mission

"To foster and grow the GAA across Ulster strengthening its position as the Provinces leading amateur sporting; cultural; community and volunteer driven movement."

Teaghlaigh agus Pobail an Fabraic de CLG" Ulster GAA Action Plan and Vision 2009-2015

National GAA Urban Development Plan Vision

"By 2016 we will be able to say we have increased the numbers of players and volunteers active in clubs and schools in urban areas by 20% over the period of the plan. We have done this by putting in place initiatives that promote the club as the centre of the community. A dedicated national committee is responsible for achieving the targeted results in each area."

The GAA Strategic Vision and Action Plan 2009-2015

"Ardú Bhéal Feirste" Vision

"To see gaelic games and culture making a visible and tangible contribution to community; sporting; social; and economic life in Ireland's second city."



Working to the Values of Ulster GAA

“Ardú Bhéal Feirste: Belfast Rising” fits within the organisational and strategic frameworks set by Ulster GAA. As part of the GAA, Comhairle Uladh is unequivocally value-driven. The values which guide its plans and its day-to-day work, and which will be shared by “Ardú Bhéal Feirste”, are:

Community:

The GAA in Ulster is unashamedly community-based. It uses gaelic games to represent and to energise communities, giving them a focus and contributing to their well-being and sustainability. As communities change and develop, Ulster GAA will reflect and respond to those changes. It will do that from a position which is anti-sectarian; anti-racist and which encourages the active and enjoyable involvement of everyone.

Volunteerism:

The GAA offers an involvement that people are in turn free to take or leave: the Association is based on choice. It also believes in cherishing its volunteers and supporting them to reach their full potential in terms of how they contribute to the GAA and their communities. The GAA's current strength is largely down to an unwavering practice of contributing to this generation whilst re-investing for the next one: Ulster GAA will continue that practice. We share our work and our benefits in the proven belief that shared benefits endure. Where Ulster GAA needs to buy in expert help or support it will do so in open and transparent ways which conform to best purchasing and recruitment practice.

Identity:

The GAA gives life to a number of core elements of Irish identity. It gives people a sense of connection with their place; their community; their heritage, history and culture. In doing that it helps to form a greater sense of personal identity; pride in place and community and self-worth. Retaining and fostering an outward-looking sense of Irishness in a world that is becoming more and more uni-dimensional is an important part of the GAA's work.

Inclusion:

The GAA is open to everyone who subscribes to what it does and how it does it. Ulster GAA recognises however that there are historic deficits to be addressed – among them for women; for people with disabilities; and for people from non-traditional GAA backgrounds. Inclusion also means being interested in everyone who's interested in the GAA, irrespective of their levels of ability, playing or otherwise.

Excellence:

Ulster GAA believes its work is fundamentally important to the well-being of communities and people across Ulster and beyond. Because it's important it must be developed and delivered to the best possible standards. Good enough isn't good enough. Ulster GAA will operate to the highest possible standards and make sure it, and everyone involved with it, can be proud of what it does and how it does it.

Developing a Strategy for the GAA in Belfast

Although unappreciated by many Belfast, is, unequivocally, Ireland's second city. It is however a place where the GAA is not as strong as it might be. There are a number of historic reasons for this ...but this strategy is about moving the GAA in the city and the surrounding greater Belfast area forward, rather than gazing back at “what-might-have-been”.

Belfast has been identified as a Group 1 major urban development project area in the GAA Strategic Vision and Action Plan. The strategy for the GAA Belfast has been developed to give direction to the overall development of the GAA in the City.

This piece of work was energised by the Antrim and Down GAA County Boards and by Comhairle Uladh. It was driven by the belief that the welfare of the GAA in Belfast is an issue of both a national and a provincial importance. The main task was to develop a strategy which would:

- Identify the core issues facing the Association in the greater Belfast area
- Reflect the strategic significance of Belfast
- Set the city and surrounding urban area within the national GAA context
- Take on board lessons learned from city-based GAA initiatives elsewhere
- Fit the GAA in greater Belfast within the wider sports; leisure; community; and cultural contexts
- Include specific community development aspects
- Set out well-founded and focussed proposals for the development of all aspects of the Association across the city
- Identify opportunities for partnership working
- Reflect the new political arrangements and understandings in the six Counties.

The planning process was taken forward by a core planning group made up of key GAA stakeholders from across the city and beyond. The process was informed by both a widespread consultation and a robust, desk-based analysis. Everything in this strategy reflects those inputs.





Historic Belfast

With a population of some 580,000 the Belfast urban area is by a long way Ireland's second city, drawing together more people than Cork; Derry; Galway; Limerick and Waterford cities combined. It now stretches round Belfast Lough and southwards along the Lagan Valley, being bounded on the west by the Divis and Black Mountains and by the Castlereagh Hills on the east.

Although local settlement can be traced back to the Bronze Age, Belfast as a place of significance is a relatively new phenomenon in Ireland. It originated at the south-west corner of Belfast Lough, Belfast/Béal Feirste literally meaning the Mouth of the Farset, a small and now hidden river which flows into Belfast Lough. Until the Plantation of Ulster Belfast was a place of little note and during most of the Middle Ages and afterwards was overshadowed in strategic terms by Carrickfergus.

Over the course of the 1700s Belfast grew from about 2,000 to 20,000 people but in the following Century changed beyond all recognition. The growth of the linen industry had given the city an early industrial momentum, one which exploded during the 1800s on the back of ship-building; engineering; rope-making; iron-making; and a range of other industries. In the space of the 19th Century, Belfast's population rocketed from 20,000 to 350,000 making it one of Europe's major industrial cities. The sectarian geography which still characterises the city also emerged and took hold during these decades.

If the 19th Century was one of exponential growth, the 20th Century was largely one of gradual decline as global competition weakened Belfast's prime position. In population terms it continued to grow, reaching around 0.45m people by 1950. One result of the decline which then set in (compounded by the impact of the Troubles) was a severely-blighted inner city: in the 1970s and 1980s the central city population fell by a staggering 55%. Belfast however continued to grow as a commercial; service; and administrative centre and in many ways still dominates the six Counties in particular: much of the area's third level education is for example concentrated here. The conflict of the late 20th Century had a greater impact on Belfast than anywhere else with over 1,500 people (half the NI total) losing their lives here. A whole series of legacies of the conflict thus persist across the city.

Since the 1980s in particular a variety of mostly very successful regeneration initiatives have been rolled out across Belfast. Approaches to housing and community renewal and initiatives such as Making Belfast Work and Laganside set innovative standards for regeneration subsequently copied by many elsewhere. Belfast now moves into the new millennium as a rejuvenated city and one with a growing all-island significance as part of the Dublin/Belfast corridor. It is however equally a city which still faces many, many social and economic problems.

People in Greater Belfast

The Belfast urban area straddles two Counties (Antrim and Down) and six Council areas (Carrickfergus; Newtownabbey; Belfast; Lisburn; Castlereagh; and North Down). It is home to 580,000 people, spread across a number of locations as follows:

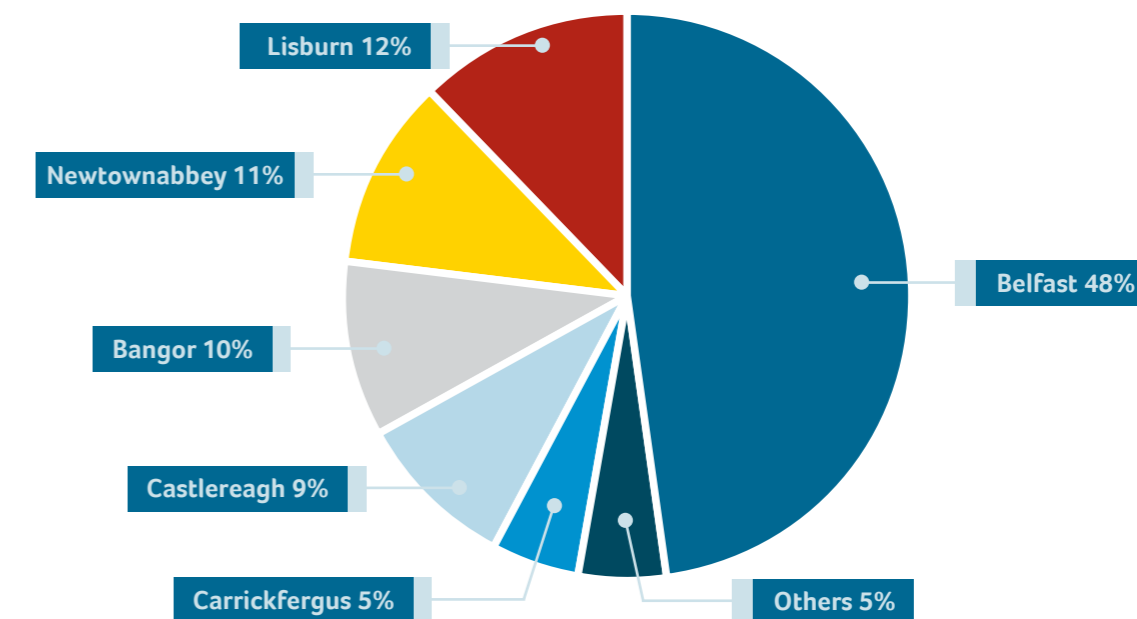
Place	People
Belfast	276,000
Lisburn	71,500
Newtownabbey	62,000
Bangor	58,500
Castlereagh	55,000
Carrickfergus	27,000
Others	30,000
Total	580,000

Belfast local government District thus accounts for just under half the Urban Area's population.



People in Greater Belfast

Belfast Urban Area: Population Distribution



Belfast's population age profile is slightly older than the NI one overall with 22% aged under 16 and 19% aged over 60 (the equivalent NI figures are 24% and 18%). In terms of the NI community divide 34% of people are from a Catholic community background: religious segregation across the city remains intense however, with most localities being clearly identified with one community or the other.

Compared with the rest of NI, people in Belfast are more likely to be qualified to degree level or above and to work in the public sector or in services: they are less likely to work in manufacturing or construction. They are also more likely to be involved in professional or managerial occupations and to earn salaries/wages that are above the NI average.

There is however equally a pattern of inner-urban Belfast being less prosperous and more disadvantaged than outer-suburban Belfast. Large tracts of the city, particularly in the inner-east; the west; and the north exhibit levels of deprivation and disadvantage that are among the very worst in NI. Problems here typically relate to high unemployment; low incomes; poor health status; fractured social structures; low educational achievement and poor living environments.

Government's Neighbourhood Renewal initiative is one core response to these difficulties. Some 15 Neighbourhood Renewal Areas (NRAs), with a total population of nearly 160,000 have been designated where there will be concerted, all-fronts approaches rolled out to advance community; social; economic and physical renewal. The GAA across the city is keen to play a central role in these approaches.

In Summary ...

The Greater Belfast urban area:

- Is the key economic; commercial; and political/administrative driver of much of the north-east of Ireland
- Has an economic and social history that's different to most of the rest of Ireland
- Hosts a number of vibrant cultural activities
- Is governed by a number of local and other public authorities
- Experiences some of the most acute levels of deprivation to be found anywhere in Ireland
- Was the scene of the worst of the NI conflict
- Is, in many places acutely segregated
- Is subject to a variety of regeneration initiatives



Gaelic Belfast

Although in many ways unacknowledged, Belfast has a particular gaelic tradition. The legacy of the 1792 Belfast Harping Festival remains to this day and organisations like the Henry Joy McCracken Literary Society fed into the great gaelic revival at the turn of the 19th Century. At this time too Michael Cusack visited the city and acclaimed its gaelic activities. Irish republican thinking flourished here in the 1790s, helping create a sense of Irishness that has stood many subsequent tests. Over the past three decades west Belfast has brought a huge energy to a variety of Irish cultural activities. The West Belfast Festival has, against great odds, developed into Ireland's most dynamic community festival and this part of the city also has a thriving gaeltacht community. Additionally the City recently hosted the World Irish Dancing Championships.



GAA Belfast

Belfast played a leading part in the early development of the GAA with Antrim's first five GAA Clubs emerging in the city and Lisburn in 1885. The city was strongly represented on the Antrim football teams which dominated Ulster in the early 1900s and in the 1920s Corrigan Park was bought and St Malachy's College won a first MacRory Cup. Belfast however has not subsequently reached its full GAA potential. Down's spectacular and trail-blazing football successes since 1960 have been driven from the rest of the County with Belfast having little direct

input. Antrim meanwhile has declined as a GAA inter-County force in the post-war years. And there are large parts of the city where the GAA's presence is either zero or minimal.

But there are exceptions. Since its opening in 1953 Casement Park has gone on to become one of the GAA's iconic venues. West Belfast hosts a number of GAA Clubs which have had a strong presence on the national stage. Queen's; UUJ; and St Mary's have become leading presences in third level football. The Colleges' GAA work has of course a significance that ranges far beyond the city boundaries as they provide the critical mass of Ulster's third level provision.

A number of new GAA Clubs have sprung up and become vibrant entities in broadly south Belfast over the past couple of decades. And most interestingly of all the Belfast Cuchullains cross-community hurling initiative is bringing the GAA to the heart of non-traditional GAA communities in open; respectful; and inclusive ways.

Throughout this time "Belfast GAA" has essentially been an Antrim-based phenomenon with little substantive development on the Down side of The Lagan. This is reflected in the distribution of GAA Clubs in the Greater Belfast area: of the 26 in the city, 23 are in Antrim and three are in Down. The position in terms of Club facilities can be summarised as follows:

Facility	Numbers of Clubs
Own full-size pitch	12: 48%
Changing rooms	10: 40%
Training pitch	5: 20%
Structured use of others' facilities	7: 28%

GAA Belfast

Just 20% of Clubs thus have the modern GAA Club benchmark provision of two pitches and changing rooms. At the same time over two-thirds (17) are dual Clubs, delivering both football and hurling; no other part of Ulster reaches this level of achievement. Greater Belfast's GAA Clubs are as follows:

- **Ardoyne Kickhams**
- **Cardinal O'Donnell's**
- **Eire Óg**
- **St. Patrick's, Lisburn**
- **Gort na Mona**
- **Henry Joy McCracken's**
- **John Mitchel's**
- **Lámh Dhearg**
- **Michael Davitt's**
- **Michael Dwyer's**
- **Na Fuisseoige**
- **O'Donovan Rossa**
- **Patrick Pearse's**
- **Patrick Sarsfield's**
- **Sean McDermott's**
- **St. Agnes'**
- **St. Brigid's**
- **St. Enda's**
- **St. Gall's**
- **St. John's**
- **St. Malachy's**
- **St. Paul's**
- **St. Teresa's**
- **Bredagh**
- **Carryduff**
- **St. Paul's, Hollywood**



In Summary ...

In GAA terms the Greater Belfast urban area:

- Is home to some of the Association's strongest units, including a number of new and very vibrant Clubs
- Simultaneously has large areas where GAA activity is minimal
- Promotes and delivers both football and hurling
- Is the location of one of the GAA's iconic stadia, Casement Park
- Has severe deficits in terms of the infrastructure needed to facilitate gaelic games
- Hosts much of Ulster's third level GAA activity
- Is governed by two different County Boards ... a situation not shared by any other city in Ireland
- Doesn't reflect parish boundaries in terms of its Club catchments
- Does not have the GAA embedded in its schools structures



Club Audit Results

Club Audit Results

Club	Membership			Games					Coaches		Facilities					Scór	
	Total	Male	Female	Mens Football	Ladies Football	Camogie	Hurling	Handball	Male	Female	No. of Pitches	Changing Rooms	Hall	Gym	Social Facilities	Scór na nÓg	Scór Sinsear
Ardoyne Kickhams	350	280	70	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	54	13	0	0	0	0	Yes	Yes	No
Cardinal O'Donnells	250	220	30	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	30	4	1	2	0	0	Yes	No	No
Eire Óg	240	210	30	Yes	No	No	No	No	28	1	0	0	0	0	No	No	No
St. Patrick's, Lisburn	180	165	15	Yes	No	No	No	No	21	0	1	0	0	0	No	No	No
Gort na Mona	480	400	80	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	76	6	1	4	0	1	Yes	No	No
Henry Joy McCracken's	60	50	10	Yes	No	No	No	No	1	0	0	0	0	0	No	No	No
John Mitchel's	100	80	20	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	11	0	1	0	0	0	No	No	No
Lámh Dhearg	510	460	50	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	67	19	1	4	0	0	Yes	No	No
Michael Davitt's	260	230	30	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	20	0	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	No
Lagmore Gaels	80	50	30	Yes	No	No	No	No	1	5	0	0	0	0	No	No	No
O'Donovan Rossa	550	430	120	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	32	10	1	4	0	0	Yes	Yes	No
Patrick Pearse's	100	80	20	Yes	No	No	No	No	3	0	0	0	0	0	No	No	No
Patrick Sarsfield's	410	380	30	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	48	2	1	2	0	0	Yes	No	No
Sean McDermott's	90	70	20	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	12	2	0	0	0	0	Yes	No	No
St. Agnes'	275	230	45	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	24	3	0	0	0	0	No	No	No
St. Brigid's	710	510	200	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	54	50	1	2	0	0	No	Yes	Yes
St. Enda's	460	400	60	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	30	3	1	0	0	0	Yes	Yes	No
St. Gall's	660	510	150	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	61	5	2	4	0	0	Yes	No	No
St. John's	610	500	110	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	28	0	2	2	1	0	Yes	No	No
St. Malachy's	90	60	30	Yes	No	No	No	No	2	0	0	0	0	0	No	No	No
St. Paul's	540	390	150	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	20	10	1	4	0	0	Yes	No	No
St. Teresa's	325	235	90	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	10	5	2	4	0	0	Yes	No	No
Dwyers	60	50	10	Yes	No	No	No	No	1	0	0	0	0	0	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bredagh	960	540	420	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	67	37	0	0	0	0	No	Yes	Yes
St. Paul's, Hollywood	320	200	120	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	6	0	1	2	0	0	No	Yes	Yes
Carryduff	440	240	200	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	2	0	3	4	0	0	No	Yes	Yes
	9110	6970	2140						709	201	20	38	1	1			



Towards a Strategy for the GAA in Belfast

The analyses developed by the core planning group have identified a number of strategic issues which need to be addressed if the GAA in Belfast is to achieve the necessary critical mass and momentum. These can be summarised as follows:

- “Belfast GAA” has no cross-city brand image ... i.e. there is no structured promotion of the images; ideas; expectations; and associations attached to the GAA across the city
- The GAA in the city is essentially an Antrim phenomenon: substantial developmental work is required on the Down side of the Lagan
- Specific GAA facilities in the greater Belfast area
- Attachment-to-place is a key driver of the GAA: work is needed to bring this very powerful force to life in city communities ... probably through an increased link between the GAA and local community development
- Belfast provides opportunities to promote and develop gaelic culture which few other places in Ulster enjoy: these opportunities need to be seized by the GAA

are inadequate and a substantial increase in provision is required: this can only be achieved through partnership working within and beyond the GAA and by the adoption of innovative and pioneering solutions



Belfast Strategic Themes

The Belfast Strategic Planning Group identified six strategic themes for development in order to increase the GAA's performance and market share in the Greater Belfast area.

- Organisation, Management, Awareness and Development
- Club, Community and Volunteer Wellbeing
- Participation, Coaching and Games Development

- “Including Others” Diversity and Inclusion
- Culture, Arts and Language
- Physical Development and Provision

These are dealt with in turn from page 17 onwards. The strategy deliberately focuses on Belfast-specific issues only. Other “mainstream” GAA business is deemed to be dealt with by Counties and Clubs as part of their ongoing day-to-day business.



1. Organisation, Management, Awareness and Development

What needs to be done	Who will be involved	Timescale	Outcomes sought
Host an annual “Belfast GAA Summit” bringing together representatives of all the city’s GAA Clubs (including those in the third level education sector) along with County and Provincial representatives and other stakeholders.	Belfast Strategic Workgroup, Ulster Council GAA, Antrim GAA, Down GAA, Colleges.	Year 1	An annual strategic focus on Belfast city GAA issues.
Establish a Management Group of eight members with representatives from Ulster GAA; Antrim and Down County Boards; third level; and the “Belfast GAA Summit”.	Belfast Strategic Workgroup, Ulster Council GAA, Antrim GAA, Down GAA, Colleges, “Belfast GAA Summit”	Year 1	Clear operational leadership for the implementation of the Belfast Strategic Plan.
Link with local authorities (including the post-RPA arrangements) in the implementation of the strategy and ensure that needs of the GAA are identified/acknowledged in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Section 75 Statutory responsibilities• Sports development input (actual and future)• Land availability (future development)• Provision of pitches• Grant aid (funding and future procurement)• Councils’ post-RPA Duty of Wellbeing	“Belfast GAA Summit”, Ulster Council GAA, Antrim GAA, Down GAA.	Year 1-3 (ongoing)	Specific, focussed involvement of local government in the development of gaelic games across the wider city and collaboration by GAA Clubs and Counties with local government.
Establish a Community Development Officer post with responsibility for the project management and implementation of Ardu Bheal Feirste.	Belfast Management Group, Ulster Council GAA, Central Council.	Year 1	Executive responsibility for the day to day “roll-out” of the strategy.
Ensure that the GAA in Belfast is playing a full and active part in Sport Belfast and surrounding Sports Development Units in Lisburn, North Down, Castlereagh, Antrim and Newtownabbey Councils.	Belfast Management Group, Community Development Officers.	Year 1-5	GAA playing a full an active part in the development and work of local government sports development units.
Design and promote a specific GAA brand for Belfast, reflecting national and provincial guidelines.	Belfast Management Group, Community Development Officer, Ulster GAA.	Year 2	An increasingly visible presence for and awareness of the GAA across the city.



1. Organisation, Management, Awareness and Development

What needs to be done	Who will be involved	Timescale	Outcomes sought
Ensure that gaelic games and GAA activities are included/reflected in any local government or public authority plans and strategies, including Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership Board Strategies.	Belfast Management Group, Community Development Officer, DSD, DCAL DENI, DOE Sport NI.	Year 1-5 (ongoing)	GAA recognised by and contributing to public and community plans and strategies.
Convene a meeting of the local authority Chief Executives and Directors of Development to initiate dialogue and collaborative working structures, roles and responsibilities. Seek future meetings with Managers of Sports Development service. Meet sports development officers twice annually to ensure that the GAA and local government are working together to achieve mutually beneficial goals	Community Development Officer, Ulster GAA .	Year 1-5 (ongoing)	Ongoing links and contact with all local government sports development staff.
Lobby local Councillors and MLAs to ensure that Belfast-wide Gaelic Games and GAA activities and development plans are being communicated to the government agencies and departments.	Belfast Management Group, Community Development Officer, Ulster GAA.	Year 1-5 (ongoing)	Awareness and linkage between the GAA and all public authorities.
Organise a City-wide annual seminar for school Principals and Governors to inform them of GAA developments at City, County and Provincial Level.	Community Development Officer.	Year 2	School Management supporting the ongoing development of Gaelic Games.
Organise an annual working breakfast for members of the Press and Media.	Community Development Officer.	Year 2	Strong links and a positive relationship with the press and an increased awareness of city-wide GAA issues and initiatives.
Establish a link with BELB/Education and Skills Authority and other educational bodies to ensure that the GAA is linked with their future plans and developments.	Community Development Officer.	Year 2-5 (ongoing)	Increased GAA/ education collaboration and sharing of facilities.



1. Organisation, Management, Awareness and Development

What needs to be done	Who will be involved	Timescale	Outcomes sought
Establish links with urban intervention projects and establish Gaelic Games as a tool for improving local social capital and community cohesion.	Community Development Officer.	Year 3	Gaelic games fully embedded in inner-city communities.
Ensure that the GAA is represented on all sports; community; and other relevant boards and committees in wider Belfast area.	Belfast Management Group, Community Development Officer.	Year 3-5 (ongoing)	GAA better placed to contribute to the development of the city's social capital.
Promote Casement Park as a key marketing tool for the GAA Belfast and place it at the heart of the city's GAA brand.	Belfast Management Group, Community Development Officer, Antrim GAA.	Year 1-5 (ongoing)	Belfast's main and ionic GAA stadium being used to further develop the awareness and development of Gaelic Games.
Organise a annual city-wide GAA banquet for Belfast.	Belfast Management Group, Community Development Officer.	Year 3-5 (ongoing)	One annual, high-profile event celebrating the presence and achievements of the GAA in Belfast.
Secure, on a regular basis, national GAA events such as the Sigerson/Fitzgibbon Cups; the Hogan Cup; and the Railway Cup for the city and promote/market these as city-specific GAA initiatives.	Belfast Management Group, Ulster GAA.	Year 2-5 (ongoing)	Recognised, regular presence in Belfast of GAA events of national significance.





2. Club, Community and Volunteer Wellbeing

What needs to be done	Who will be involved	Timescale	Outcomes sought
Appraise existing club catchment areas and agree “areas of operation” for Club youth programmes.	Belfast Urban Steering Group, Community Development Officer.	Year 1	An increased focus on the importance of place and community as the key GAA dynamic.
Organise two annual Club Officer and community training seminars specifically for Belfast Club Officers.	Belfast Urban Steering Group, Community Development Officer.	Year 1-5 (Ongoing)	A growing focus on and appreciation of city-wide GAA issues.
Encourage all Clubs to follow the “Belfast GAA” branding initiatives.	Ulster GAA Community Development Officer.	Year 1-2	Increased awareness of the “Belfast GAA” brand.



3. Participation, Coaching and Games

What needs to be done	Who will be involved	Timescale	Outcomes sought
Employ five Belfast City GAA Community Coaching Officers as in conjunction with local government as part of the Sport NI active communities programme. These officers will have a remit for the promotion of the six gaelic sports and will focus on games promotion and participation in clubs. Employ at least five Belfast City specific GAA School Coaching Officers with a focus on promoting games in schools.	Ulster GAA, Belfast Urban Steering Group, Community Development Officer, Local Government.	Year 1	Increased GAA participation and improved quality of games.
In conjunction with clubs and schools establish two central summer camps for U-12 children one located in North/ West Belfast and one located in East/ South Belfast catering for Camogie, Football, Handball and Hurling.	Community Development Officer, Urban Coaching Officers.	Year 2-5 (Ongoing)	Increased GAA participation and improved quality of games.
Organise one central week long Summer Camp for U-16 children.	Community Development Officer, Urban Coaching Officers.	Year 2-5 (Ongoing)	Increased GAA participation and improved quality of games.
Establish a central week long Handball summer camp in conjunction with QUB.	Community Development Officer, Urban Coaching Officers.	Year 3-5 (Ongoing)	Increased handball participation and improved quality of games.
During the lifetime of this strategy ensure that every club has at least <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five Foundation Level Coaches • Two Level one Coaches • One Level two Coach 	Community Development Officer, Urban Coaching Officers, Ulster GAA.	Year 2-5 (Ongoing)	Increase in the number of active coaches at club across the city.
Develop structured club/school links, with clubs “mentoring” individual schools across the city.	Community Development Officer, Urban Coaching Officers.	Year 2-5 (Ongoing)	The Gaelic Games being the first choice sport for children in schools across Belfast.
Organise two annual Belfast-specific Foundation and Level 1 courses for Club coaches.	Community Development Officer, Urban Coaching Officers, Ulster GAA.	Year 2-5	Improved quality of coaching and structured cross-fertilisation of ideas re city-specific GAA coaching issues.



3. Participation, Coaching and Games

What needs to be done	Who will be involved	Timescale	Outcomes sought
Organise and promote city-wide interschool GAA competitions.	Community Development Officer, Urban Coaching Officers.	Year 3-5	Increased GAA participation and improved quality of games for a key target audience, all within the "Belfast GAA" brand.
Promote the delivery of city-wide recreational "fun" games for children and adults.	Community Development Officer, Urban Coaching Officers.	Year 3-5	Increased GAA participation by key target audiences, all within the "Belfast GAA" brand.
Organise and promote city-wide underage street leagues and blitz competitions.	Community Development Officer, Urban Coaching Officers.	Year 3-5	Increased GAA participation by key target audiences, all within the "Belfast GAA" brand.
Establish citywide elite squads at U-14 and u-16 level for Hurling, Football, Camogie and Ladies Gaelic Football.	Community Development Officer, Urban Coaching Officers.	Year 2-5	Elite squads organised at both age levels for all field sports.
Continue to support the development and delivery of gaelic games and associated activities within the city's third level Colleges.	Third Level Development Officers	Year 1-5	Strong, visible third level GAA presence within the city.



4. "Including Others" Diversity and Inclusion

What needs to be done	Who will be involved	Timescale	Outcomes sought
Establish a link with the Ulster-Scots movement to promote the shared cultural territory in Hurling and Shinty. Establish two additional cross-community Hurling/Shinty teams to complement work of the Belfast Cuchullains.	Community Development Officer, Urban Coaches.	Year 1-3	Increased and effective placing of gaelic games at the heart of the good relations agenda.
Organise a series of disability game events in conjunction with the relevant authorities for Belfast schools in conjunction Disability Sport NI.	Community Development Officer, Disability Sport NI.	Year 1-5 (Ongoing)	Increased GAA participation by a key target audience, all within the "Belfast GAA" brand.
Enhance support to the "Game of Three Halves" programme and establish at least two more similar cross-sport, cross community initiatives.	Community Development Officer, Urban Coaches, Ulster GAA.	Year 1-5 (Ongoing)	Increased and effective placing of gaelic games at the heart of the good relations agenda.
Host a "Belfast GAA" open day for individuals and groups who traditionally would have no involvement or exposure to the GAA.	Community Development Officer, Urban Coaches, Ulster GAA.	Year 1-3	Increased and effective placing of gaelic games at the heart of the good relations agenda.
Link with Local Government Good Relations units to ensure that the GAA is playing an active part in the development of tolerance, respect and diversity in the wider Belfast area.	Belfast Management Group, Community Development Officer.	Year 1-5 (Ongoing)	Increased and effective placing of gaelic games at the heart of the good relations agenda.





5. Culture, Arts and Language

What needs to be done	Who will be involved	Timescale	Outcomes sought
In conjunction with the relevant language bodies incorporate Irish Language classes into the city summer camps.	Steering Group, Community Development Officer.	Year 1	Integrated delivery of gaelic games and associated activities to young people across the city.
Organise a central annual six week Irish Language beginners course for GAA volunteers in Belfast.	Management Group, Community Development Officer.	Year 3	Increased use of Irish within the "Belfast GAA" communities.
Produce a history of the GAA in Belfast.	Steering Group, Community Development Officer.	Year 5	Comprehensive recording of the growth and development of the GAA in Ireland's second city.
Encourage clubs with facilities to develop a Gaelic Art component at each ground i.e. mural, sculpture etc.	Steering Group	Year 1-5 (Ongoing)	A visual statement at each club highlighting the importance and place of Gaelic Heritage in the GAA.
Establish a strong link with Féile an Phobail and make GAA games, culture and actives competitions central to the programme of events.	Management Group, Ulster GAA, Community Development Officer.	Year 2-5 (Ongoing)	GAA playing an active and relevant role in Ireland's most vibrant community-based arts and cultural festival.



6. Physical Development and Games Provision

What needs to be done	Who will be involved	Timescale	Outcomes sought
Carry out a mapping exercise of existing provision for gaelic games, in all settings, across the city so as to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish the current position Identify current and future shortfalls Draw up a "Belfast GAA" facilities development strategy Develop appropriate partnerships with others. 	Belfast Management Group, Community Development Officer, Ulster GAA.	Year 1	A city-wide gaelic games infrastructure that's fit-for-purpose.
Engage with QUB, St. Mary's University College, Stranmillis University College and University of Ulster, Jordanstown to develop mutually beneficial partnerships in relation to facility provision.	Community Development Officer.	Year 1	A city-wide gaelic games infrastructure that's fit-for-purpose, making best use of resources.
Lobby Planning Service regarding gaelic games open space provision.	Community Development Officer.	Year 1-5 (Ongoing)	A city-wide gaelic games infrastructure that's fit-for-purpose and which reflects community and equality considerations.
Encourage Clubs, through a city-wide GAA planning seminar, to devise innovative collaborative infrastructure projects.	Belfast Steering Group, Community Development Officer.	Year 1-3	A city-wide gaelic games infrastructure that's fit-for-purpose.
In conjunction with Belfast City Council, BELB/Education and Skills Authority and other relevant public agencies establish a Belfast Centre of GAA Participation for club, school, and recreational use (to include provision for a full-size flood-lit third-generation pitch). This facility will also serve as a home ground and training facility for St. Mary's University College GAA teams.	Belfast Management Group, Ulster GAA, Antrim GAA, St. Mary's University College.	Year 1-5 (Ongoing)	A city-wide gaelic games infrastructure that's fit-for-purpose.
In partnership with public authorities and/or the education sector investigate the feasibility of developing a central third generation pitch for use of Clubs and schools in West and North Belfast.	Belfast Management Group, Ulster GAA, Antrim GAA.	Year 1-5 (Ongoing)	Central third generation pitch developed West/North Belfast in partnership with relevant stakeholders providing facility support for Clubs, Schools and third level.



6. Physical Development and Games Provision

What needs to be done	Who will be involved	Timescale	Outcomes sought
In partnership with the relevant public authorities investigate the feasibility of developing two third generation pitches, one for use of Clubs and schools in South and East Belfast and one for use of Clubs and schools in West and North Belfast.	Belfast Management Group, Ulster GAA, Antrim GAA, Down GAA.	Year 1-5 (Ongoing)	A city-wide gaelic games infrastructure that's fit-for-purpose, making best use of resources.
In partnership with QUB refurbish the handball courts at the Physical Education Centre.	Belfast Management Group, Ulster GAA.	Year 2	Two refurbished competition standard handball courts for use in Belfast.
Enhance and support the current facility partnership arrangements between St. Bridget's GAA and Harlequins Rugby Club.	Belfast Management Group, St. Bridget's GAA, Ulster GAA.	Year 1-5 (Ongoing)	Enhanced provision for Gaelic Games in South Belfast.



Upper Springfield Urban GAA Project

In 2008 the GAA formed a partnership with the Upper Springfield Development Trust which saw the establishment of a pilot GAA Urban Participation project in the Upper Springfield area. The project focuses on increasing participation and capacity in the three Clubs in the Ballymurphy area; St.

John's GAA, Gortnamona GAA and O'Donnell's GAA. A project management board consisting of representatives of the Clubs, Community, Antrim GAA and Ulster GAA was established to oversee the work of a Community Development Officer and Urban Coach who were employed to meet the project objectives.



Redevelopment of Casement Park - Ulster GAA Provincial Stadium

Over the last 10 years the GAA has been involved, at the invitation of government and its agencies, in the proposed Multi Sports Stadium as detailed in the Maze/Long Kesh Master Plan. The GAA at Central and Provincial level responded positively to the invitation to become involved in the Maze/Long Kesh Master Plan. The Ulster GAA Council was totally committed to the concepts of a shared space and a shared future which were embodied within the proposed Multi Sports Stadium. The stadium also met the strategic requirements of the GAA in Ulster.

The need for an Ulster GAA stadium of between 40,000 and 60,000 capacity was outlined in previous strategies, most notably the GAA's Strategic Review Committee's 2002 report 'Enhancing Community Identity' and the new Ulster GAA Strategic Plan, 'Teaghligh agus Pobail An Fabraic de CLG' 2009-2015.

Ulster GAA was then asked by government to prepare an options paper outlining its strategic alternative to what had been detailed in the Maze/Long Kesh Master plan.

A steering group, led by the Ulster GAA President and Secretary was established for the purpose of making this submission. At the time of publication of "Belfast Rising" the preferred option proposed

was the provision of a New Build Stadium on the Casement Park, Belfast site. This was presented to the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure on 27th March 2009.

The design concept is to achieve an 'Iconic GAA Stadium' for Ulster and the City of Belfast, on the 12 acre site, with a capacity of 42,500, on an all-seated basis. To maximise the potential of the site in providing a state of the art stadium for the GAA it is intended that the new facility would provide a variety of usages, including sporting and non-sporting, community and commercial/retail applications. Casement Park has had a long and proud history of hosting significant GAA fixtures since it opened in 1953 and prior to the modern health and safety standards which now apply, it attracted attendances in excess of 50,000 people.

In a planning context, there is an unparalleled opportunity for the stadium to contribute significantly to the re-generation of the Greater Belfast area, within the context of the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) and the DSD Andersonstown Gateway Feasibility Study. Until now there has been a struggle to identify an exciting flagship project for this part of the City. The Andersonstown Road entrance to the site offers development potential for substantial mixed use, in terms of community, education, tourism and





Redevelopment of Casement Park - Ulster GAA Provincial Stadium




social economy uses. These would be a significant addition to other re-generation strategies and initiatives in the area.

Recent international developments in stadium design suggest that, at this early stage, the minimum construction costs of developing a 42,500 seat stadium at the current Casement Park venue will be approximately €100m. The Ulster GAA also recognises that there will be recurring costs in the running of the Stadium but these will be factored in to future Revenue and Business Plans.

The Design, Management and Operation of the Stadium will be taken forward by a 'Stadium Executive Board', to be established by the GAA at Provincial Level. Experienced personnel will be appointed to lead the project through its various stages. Other relevant stakeholders will be involved in the project as necessary.

This project represents an unprecedented opportunity to place a major facility at the centre of the Ulster GAA's physical development strategy, one that will strengthen the presence of the GAA in Ireland's second city whilst contributing significantly to its economic and social regeneration.

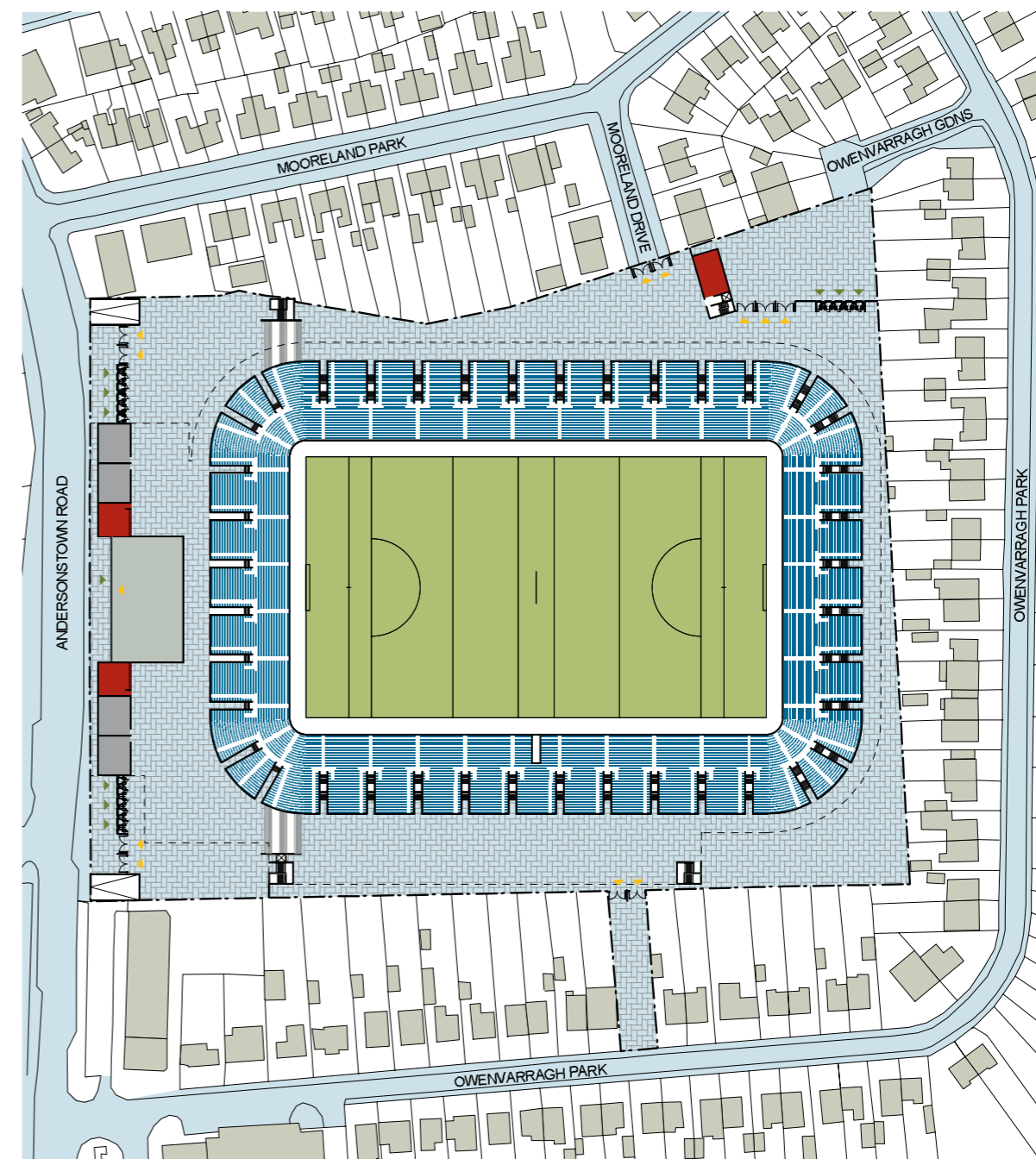
Legend

-  Seating
-  Concession
-  Toilets
-  Entry Point
-  Exit Gate
-  Premium Entrance
-  Plant / Parking
-  Concourse / Circulation



Redevelopment of Casement Park - Ulster GAA Provincial Stadium

Main Concourse Level Plan





Delivering for Ireland's Second City

The Belfast GAA Strategic Plan will only be successful if there are structures in place to ensure its delivery.

- A delegation from the Belfast Steering Group and Ulster GAA will meet with the National Urban Development Committee on an ongoing basis to give a presentation on the outcomes of the Belfast Strategy.
- The Belfast GAA Urban Project Group will meet monthly and report to the Antrim and Down County Committees. A quarterly report will also be provided to the Ulster GAA Developments Committee and the National GAA Urban Development Committee.
- The Belfast Club Forum meet on an annual basis attended by the Ulster President, Chairpersons of the Down and Antrim GAA and Ulster Provincial

Director. The Project Group will present a report on the strategies progress at the annual meeting.

- The Antrim GAA Secretary and Down GAA Secretary will meet with the relevant Ulster GAA Executive Staff on a bi-monthly basis to oversee the ongoing delivery of the plan.
- The Community Development Officers will serve as members of the Ulster GAA Community Development and Public Affairs Department and will meet on a monthly basis with the Ulster Council Community Development Staff to ensure targets are being achieved.
- The Provincial Games staff will offer ongoing training and support to the "Belfast GAA" Community Coaches.



Consultation List:

The following organisations provided feedback as part of the consultation process during the development of the strategy:

- Belfast City Council
- Lisburn City Council
- Castlereagh Borough Council
- Belfast Education and Library Board
- Sport NI
- St. Mary's University College
- Queen's University Belfast
- University of Ulster
- The Church of Ireland

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Jim Murray (Chairman)
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Frankie Quinn
Stephen McGeehan
Dr. Eugene Young

Both Tom Daly Ulster GAA President and Danny Murphy Provincial Director also attended a number of meetings. An Uachtaráin CLG Christy Cooney and Ard Stiurthoir Páraic Duffy also contributed to the development of the plan.

The steering group would also like to express its thanks for the support received from Ryan Feeney (Secretary to the Steering Group) and Mark Conway Ulster GAA Honorary Strategic Advisor for their commitment and hard work in the overall development of "Ardú Bhéal Feirste"

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