

ANTRIM GAA STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-30

Le Chéile le hAghaidh 2030





Acknowledgements

We are thrilled to present *Le Chéile le hAghaidh 2030*, a vision that has been shaped by the collective efforts and dedication of so many over the past ten months. This plan represents not just a strategic roadmap but the spirit and ambition of everyone involved in its creation. To each person who offered their insights, expertise, and passion—thank you. Your contributions have been invaluable, and together, we are building a brighter future for the Antrim GAA community.

Groups & Organisations

Club Members & Officers, Divisional Boards, Antrim GAA Management, County Staff, Academy Coaches, Primary & Post-Primary Schools, Workshop Participants, Survey Respondents, Antrim Handball, Antrim LGFA, Central Council staff, Ulster GAA staff, Saffron Business Forum, Glór na nGael, Glór na Móna, Club Aontroma, Cumann Na mBunscol Aontroma, Ulster Schools, Belfast City Council, Antrim Newtownabbey Borough Council, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, Sport Northern Ireland & Department for Communities, Saffron Gael, Cumann Sóisialta Mhic Ásmaint, McK Design.

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ANTRIM GAA STRATEGIC PLAN

Le Chéile le hAghaidh 2030

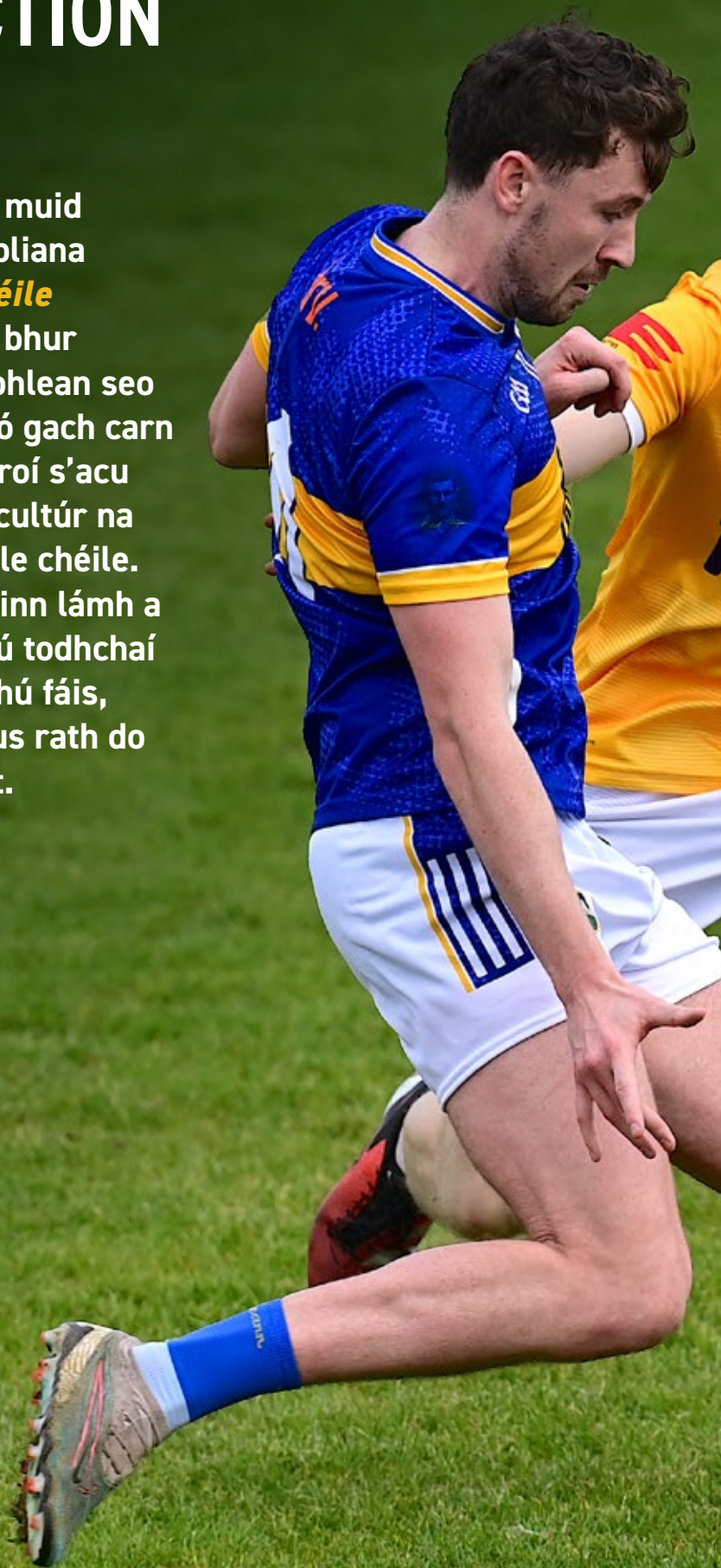
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1. INTRODUCTION

INTREOIR

Is le bród a chuireann muid plean straitéiseach 5 bliana CLG Aontroma, *Le Chéile le hAghaidh 2030* os bhur gcomhair. Is é atá sa phlean seo ná mian chun daoine, ó gach carn den chontae a bhfuil croí s'acu in spórt, teanga agus cultúr na hÉireann a tharraingt le chéile. Is le chéile gur féidir linn lámh a bheith againn in múnlú todhchaí CLG Aontroma, ag cothú fáis, ionchuimsitheacht agus rath do na glúnta atá le teacht.





This Strategic Plan has been crafted over the past 10 months through thoughtful consultation, providing a roadmap to realise our shared vision and ambitious strategic goals. While we have made significant progress to reach this point, the true journey begins now. It is time for all of us to come together with purpose, energy, and commitment to turn this vision into reality.

We must also take a moment to honour those whose tireless efforts have built the solid foundation on which we now stand. Their dedication has brought us to this pivotal moment. As we embark on this exciting new chapter, we embrace the challenge of delivering on the promises of **Le Chéile le hAghaidh 2030**. Together, we will build on past achievements, break new ground, and propel Antrim GAA into a future full of promise and potential.

This Plan is more than just a document—it is the voice of the people of Antrim. Throughout the consultation process, we listened to the passion and vision of our players (past and present), coaches, club officials, volunteers, and communities. Your insights have shaped every aspect of this Plan, ensuring it truly reflects our collective ambition for Gaelic Games, the Irish language, and our cultural identity.

Now is the time to unite and act. This Plan is our roadmap, but its success depends on our collective commitment, passion, and belief in what we can achieve. Let us seize this moment to drive the positive change we envision for Antrim GAA, securing a brighter and stronger future for the next generation of Antrim Gaels. The journey ahead is challenging, but together, we can make this vision a reality and leave a lasting legacy for those who follow.

2. FOREWORDS RÉAMHRÁ

COUNTY CHAIRPERSON
CATHAOIRLEACH AN CHONTAE





Is le bród a chuireann muid plean straitéiseach 5 bliana CLG Aontroma, **Le Chéile le hAghaidh 2030** os bhur gcomhair. Plean straitéiseach 5 bliana atá anseo a thabharfaidh treoir maidir le forbairt CLG Aontroma idir seo agus 2030.

This Plan outlines a clear vision for the future, recognising and supporting all aspects of our Association across the county. It is rooted in three core pillars, which represent the foundation of our growth and success:

Empowering Clubs

Cumainn a Chumasá

Our clubs are the lifeblood of Antrim GAA, at the very heart of our Association. This plan is designed to equip our clubs with the support, resources, and structures they need to thrive at every level. We are dedicated to enhancing facilities, raising coaching standards, and strengthening governance, ensuring that all clubs in Antrim continue to grow and succeed.

Nurturing People

Daoine a Chothú

The true strength of Antrim GAA lies in its people—players, coaches, volunteers, and supporters. We are committed to investing in our people by offering enhanced development pathways for players, continuous education and upskilling for coaches and volunteers and fostering leadership within the county. This will build a resilient, united GAA community for generations to come.

Strengthening Communities

Pobail a Neartú

Antrim GAA takes pride in its rich heritage and deep-rooted connections to the communities it serves. Through this Plan, we are committed to promoting our identity, celebrating our history, and ensuring that Gaelic Games remain central to Antrim life. Our focus will be on improving facilities and infrastructure to make Gaelic Games accessible to all, while preserving our culture and values for the future.

This five-year Plan outlines specific outcomes, objectives, and targets that will drive growth in key areas, including:

- Effective leadership and governance;
- Player, coach, and volunteer development;
- County and club infrastructure;
- Inclusion and wider community engagement;
- Promotion of Gaelic Games, heritage, and culture at all levels.

By working together, we will ensure that Antrim GAA remains strong, vibrant, and united, building on our proud traditions while advancing toward a brighter, more successful future. Together, we will inspire the next generation, build stronger foundations, and sustain long-term success, all underpinned by the values of unity, inclusivity, and ambition.

Seamus McMullan

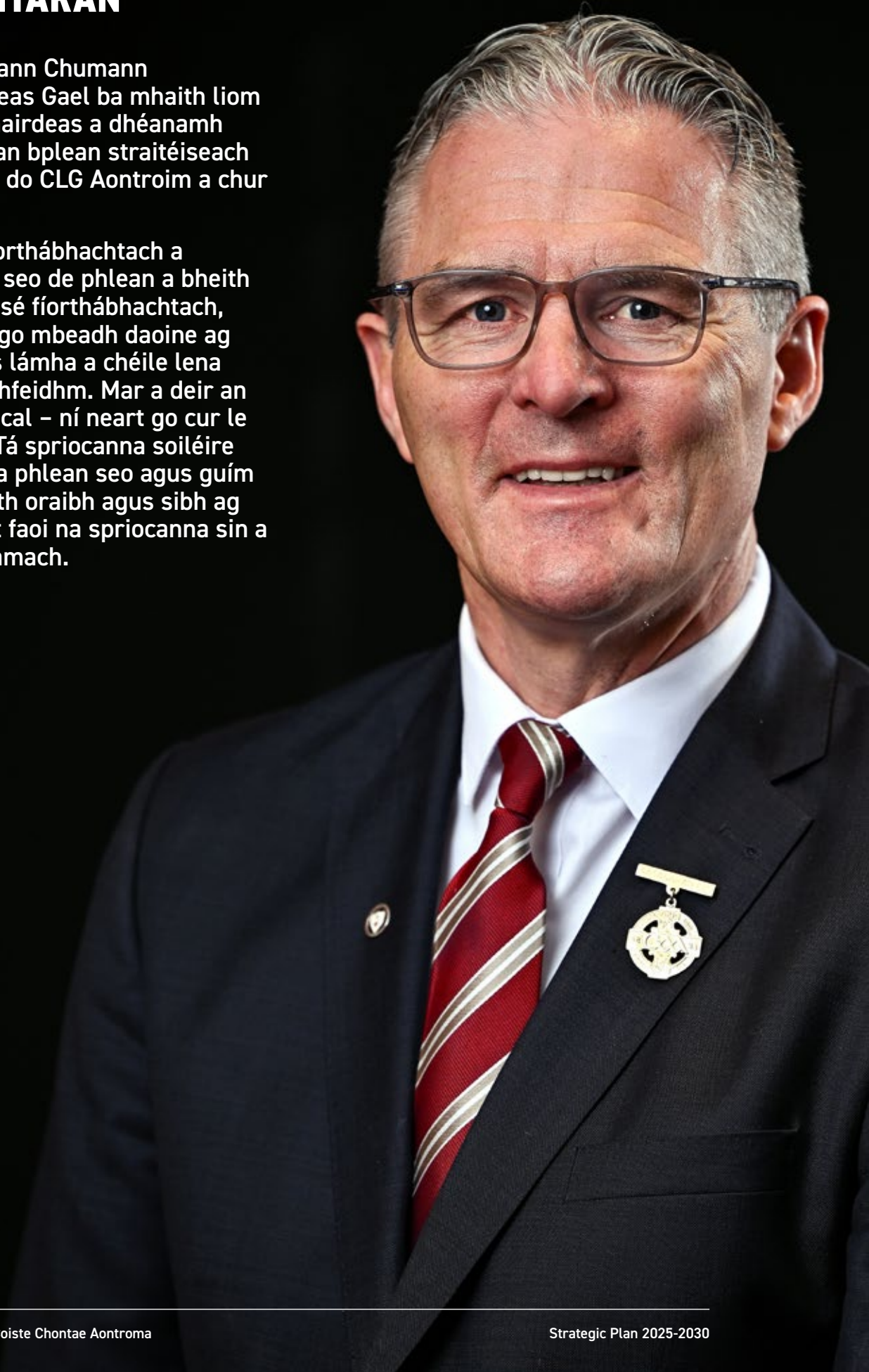
**Cathaoirleach,
Coiste Chontae Aontroim**

PRESIDENT

UACHTARÁN

Thar ceann Chumann Lúthchleas Gael ba mhaith liom comhghairdeas a dhéanamh libh as an bplean straitéiseach nua seo do CLG Aontroim a chur ar fáil.

Tá sé fíorthábhachtach a leithéid seo de phlean a bheith ann. Tá sé fíorthábhachtach, freisin, go mbeadh daoine ag obair as lámha a chéile lena chur i bhfeidhm. Mar a deir an seanfhocal – ní neart go cur le chéile. Tá spriocanna soiléire luaite sa phlean seo agus guím gach rath oraibh agus sibh ag tabhairt faoi na spriocanna sin a bhaint amach.



In welcoming this document, I congratulate all who have played a part in creating this strategic plan, which I believe will enable the GAA in Antrim to carry on its great tradition within our Association.

It is fitting that in this, the 140th anniversary of the foundation of the GAA, a proud unit such as Antrim GAA should unveil a roadmap to ensure that Gaelic Games remain relevant and popular among our membership there.

Through the more than 30 years of the bitter conflict in the North, no GAA county suffered more in that time than Antrim GAA. While others had the pull of Gaelic Games for distraction from the difficulties of life in the conflict, the everyday reality was a distraction and obstacle for people trying to live their lives, and sport and recreation suffered. The legacy of official state neglect continues to this day and evidenced by the fact that such a great city as Belfast is synonymous with the eyesore that a derelict Casement Park has become.

Yet through all of that, Antrim GAA has endured, and the mission set forth in Hayes' Hotel in 1884 is brought to life by the tireless dedication of outstanding men and women volunteering for the GAA and believing in serving something bigger than themselves and keeping our culture alive.

Honouring that commitment is a promise that we have made as an Association, and that is why we will have a day when we gather as GAA people and celebrate a Casement Park that serves Belfast, Antrim and Ulster GAA and is a monument to the people who keep our great games and culture alive.

One of the priorities for my presidency is the development of Hurling, and that is why I have carefully chosen an Antrim man, Terry Reilly, to lead this ambitious national project which will be a long-term commitment to create more clubs and to have more hurlers and play more hurling than ever before.

There is no shortage of scale and ambition in this document. *Le Chéile le hAghaidh 2030* is not just a detailed programme for the next five years – it has the potential to be the foundation stone upon which a bigger and more successful Antrim will be built long into the future.

The detailed consultative process that was invested in its make-up should hopefully ensure that many feel ownership of it rather than just a few.

The Plan's focus on inclusivity, community, and growth jumps off the pages – so too, the commitment to fostering a vibrant Antrim GAA community, where clubs are empowered, people are nurtured, and cultural heritage is celebrated.

We know that the future brings challenges - but it also brings opportunities, and I have every confidence that by working together, the vision of the plan can be achieved.

The strength of the GAA is always rooted in our People and supporting People through our clubs both on and off the field is the best way to ensure that we keep faith with the past and hand on a GAA tradition to future generations.

Ar son Chumann Lúthchleas Gael, míle buíochas uilig.

Rath Dé ar an obair.



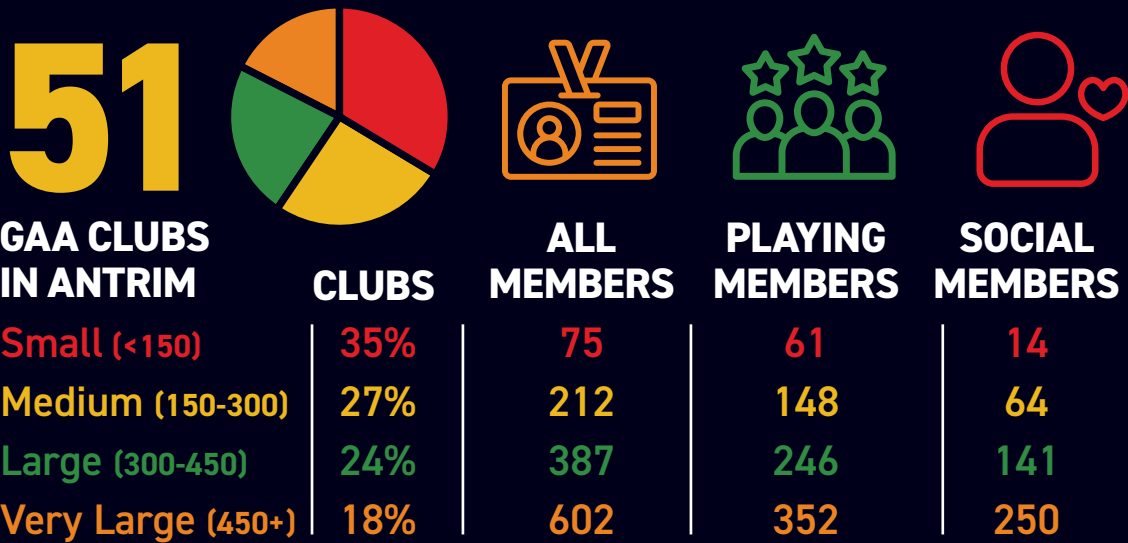
Iarlaith Ó Broin
Uachtarán

3.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

CÁ BHFUIL MUID FAOI LÁTHAIR ?

GAELIC GAMES IN ANTRIM

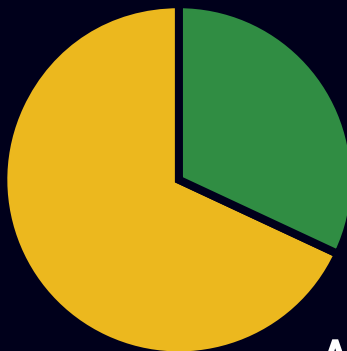


(Average Club Membership) Source: Foireann

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP

c.15,000+ PLAYERS

30% Adult
70% Youth

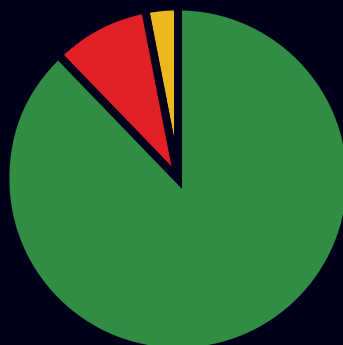


97%

of members in Antrim are affiliated to a GAA club operating as a 'One Club'

c.5,000+ NON-PLAYERS

Full 87%
Social 9%
Youth 3%



Source: Foireann

ANTRIM STRATEGY



COACHES PER CLUB

28 Football / Ladies Football	Ulster - 39
20 Hurling / Camogie	Ulster - 17
1 Handball	Ulster - 1

Source: Ulster GAA Club Audit



REFEREES PER CLUB

5 Football / Ladies Football	Ulster - 7
3 Hurling / Camogie	Ulster - 1

Source: Ulster GAA Club Audit



ANTRIM CLUBS' FINANCIAL POSITION

INCOME

2022 - 2023
£119,000

2023-2024
£105,000

EXPENDITURE

2022 - 2023
£101,000

2023 - 2024
£95,000

Source: Ulster GAA Club Audit



PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

90% Player Retention and Development	93% Youth Games Programme	90% Coach and Volunteer Recruitment
85% Primary School Coaching	82% Adult Club Games	82% Coach Education Courses
93% Post-Primary Schools Games	90% Games Development and Coaching	81% Finance and Fundraising

4. PLANNING & CONSULTATION PROCESS

PLEANÁIL & COMHAIRLIÚCHÁN

Antrim GAA proudly takes ownership of this Strategic Plan, guiding its vision and leading the way toward our collective goals. As the driving force behind its success, Antrim GAA will ensure the strategic allocation of resources to strengthen the organisation and advance its mission. Whether empowering others to achieve these objectives, fostering collaboration, or providing decisive leadership, Antrim GAA will champion the implementation of this Plan at every level.



This Strategic Plan sets a bold course, defining outcomes, objectives, and measure of success for developing Gaelic Games, heritage, language, and culture from 2025 to 2030. It focuses on fostering sustainability across all clubs and driving targeted growth in key priority areas. These priorities emerged through an extensive consultation process, led by independent facilitators from Ulster University and Sheffield Hallam University, ensuring that the voices of our community were central in shaping our future direction.

Over the past 10 months, Antrim GAA has engaged in extensive consultations with Coiste Bainistí, divisional boards, clubs, players, staff, volunteers, and a range of key stakeholders to identify the key challenges facing the organisation. These discussions helped to highlight priorities that need to be addressed in the short, medium, and long term. Throughout the process, it became clear that stakeholders' concerns were focused on several key issues.

A common theme that emerged was the need to respond to the ever-increasing demands placed on existing volunteers, particularly in clubs with fewer members. The consensus was that any strategic plan must first establish a sustainable framework that allows all clubs to progress, while also delivering targeted support to address key challenges and opportunities for Antrim GAA and its clubs across the county.

At its core, the true measure of success for any strategic plan lies in evaluating the tangible outcomes it produces - what actions were taken, who benefitted from the plan's focus, and how we know it is delivering the intended impact. For now, this Strategic Plan promotes an outcome-driven approach, where our actions are guided by creating meaningful and lasting change for our clubs, members, players, and communities.

Development of this Plan

At the outset of the planning process, Antrim GAA commissioned independent sports management professionals to facilitate the development of the new Strategic Plan. The first steps of which were to conduct a desktop strategic review of the organisation, and facilitate a Forward Planning Workshop with Coiste Bainistí of CLG Aontroma to understand the current situation and challenges going forward.

This desktop review was based on the following information provided by Antrim GAA: Antrim GAA Strategy 2020-22; Operational Structures; Policies and Procedures; GAA Governance Guide; Financial Accounts; Current Budget; Risk Register and Operational Plans.

The Forward Planning Workshop was well attended by Coiste Bainistí members (n=14) and provided a particularly useful starting point for the strategic planning process. The purpose of the workshop was to gather insights on the following:

- Key successes & challenges relating to the current plan (Looking Back)?
- Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats for Antrim GAA (Today)?
- Key steps that should be taken to develop, consult on, and launch a new Strategic Plan (2025-2030) (Looking Forward)?

Coiste Bainistí members demonstrated strong confidence in the essential steps needed to shape, consult on, and successfully launch our new strategic plan. With unanimous approval from CLG Aontroma in April 2024, a dynamic project plan and core themes were set in motion. To ensure a focussed and collaborative approach, regular meetings were held with the leadership team to drive the strategic planning process forward with purpose and insight.

Consultation with Stakeholders

The outcomes, objectives, and measures of success in this Strategic Plan were crafted through an in-depth consultation process addressing the most pressing issues facing Antrim GAA today. Between April and October 2024, we conducted over 50 focus groups and one-to-one meetings with key stakeholders, creating a vital platform to explore challenges and opportunities for Antrim GAA, our clubs, and the wider community. These sessions provided valuable insights into our current landscape and helped shape a strategy to drive the growth of Gaelic Games, culture, and heritage in Antrim over the next five years.

These discussions centred on key themes: (1) notable achievements and successes, (2) critical challenges facing the organisation, and (3) future priorities for action. The feedback gathered underlined the importance of:

- Effective leadership and governance;
- Player, coach, and volunteer development;
- County and club infrastructure;
- Inclusion and wider community engagement;
- Promotion of Gaelic Games, heritage, and culture at all levels.

To broaden participation in the consultation process, an online survey was also conducted, yielding approximately 300 completions. More than half of the responses came from individuals active in affiliated clubs, while an additional 25% represented the views of clubs themselves (as shown in Figure 1).

The responses to the survey indicate that there is only a very limited awareness of Ulster GAA's 'Future For All' strategy, with only 6% having had time to read and understand the document. A further 17% are aware of the strategy but have not fully digested its contents, while more than half of all of respondents to the consultation exercise were entirely unaware of the report.

Survey respondents were asked to score a range of elements of delivery in terms of importance and satisfaction, and the results are presented in Figures 3 and 4. Scores range from 1, indicating low importance or satisfaction, to 5, which indicates high importance or satisfaction.

The first point to note is that consultees considered that every aspect of the delivery of Gaelic Games had at least some importance to themselves or to their club. There are distinctions to be drawn however, in terms of satisfaction levels, which suggest that there is room for improvement in the delivery of Gaelic Games in Antrim. In Figure 3, the talent academy (2.4) and primary schools coaching (2.5) stand out as having low satisfaction scores, the latter being of particular concern as it is ranked the most important aspect of delivery. Opinions are otherwise broadly neutral on the remaining programmes and competitions.

Figure 1 - Representation in the Survey

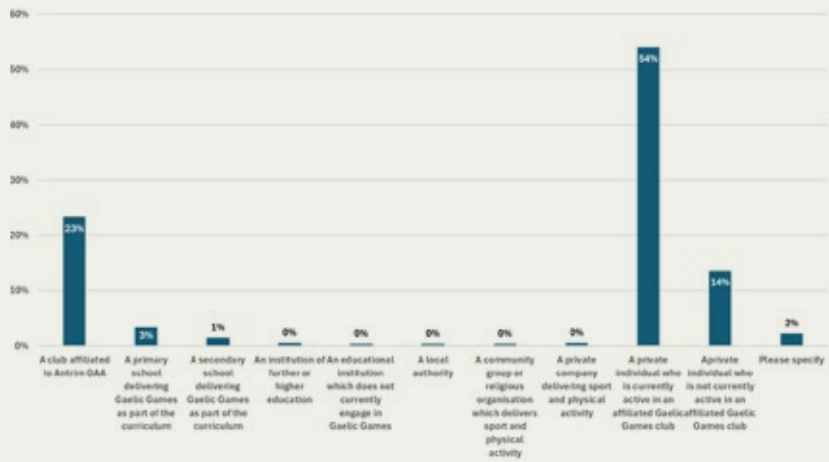


Figure 2 - Awareness of Ulster GAA Strategy

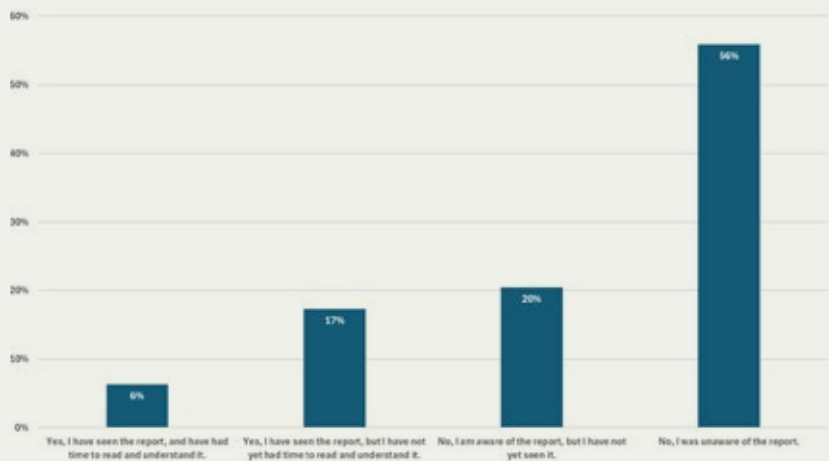


Figure 3 - Gap Analysis of Survey Respondents

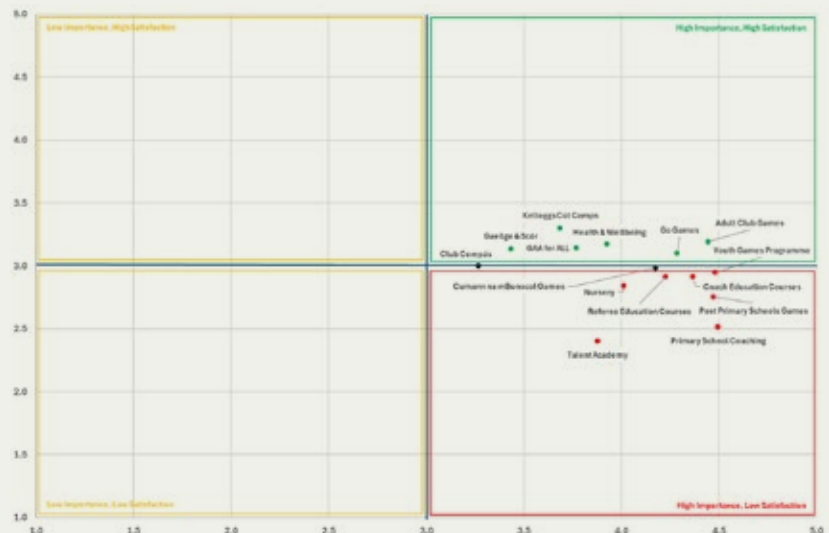
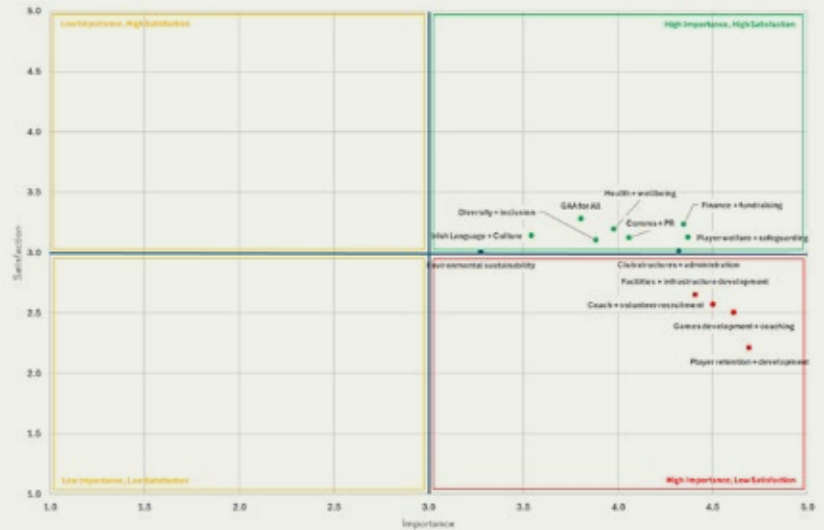


Figure 4 shows a similar pattern, with all aspects of delivery being rated as important, and satisfaction scores generally close to neutral. It is notable however, that player retention and development scores only 2.2 out of 5 in terms of satisfaction, while scores for games development and coaching (2.5), coach and volunteer recruitment (2.6) and facilities and infrastructure development (2.7) are also in negative territory. As with Figure 5, the lowest satisfaction scores are associated with the programmes ranked the most important by the consultees.

Figure 4 - Gap Analysis of Survey Respondents



These results should concern all those with an interest in Gaelic Games in Antrim, since they suggest that the delivery of some of the fundamental building blocks of sport development is falling short.

Ongoing analysis of open-ended survey responses is highlighting critical areas of concern, including:

player retention; coach development; access to high quality facilities; transparency of governance, and the ongoing debate surrounding the redevelopment of Casement Park. These insights will continue to inform and refine the actions we take as we move forward with implementing this Strategic Plan.



Review of Antrim GAA's 2024 Club Audit Findings

In Spring 2024, Antrim GAA clubs were invited to participate in an audit conducted by Ulster GAA, repeating a similar exercise from 2020. Clubs were asked to share data on membership, participation, language and culture, coaching, officiating, volunteering, and finance. Early findings from the audit suggest that Antrim clubs are in a relatively strong position compared to those across Ulster, particularly in terms of participation numbers in Hurling and Camogie.

Figures 5 and 6 illustrate the average number of boys and girls per club participating in Gaelic football and Hurling/Camogie. Two key patterns emerge. First, participation in Gaelic football among boys aligns closely with the Ulster average, with numbers in the younger age groups (up to under-12) consistently exceeding the provincial benchmark before dipping slightly below it from the under-14 age group onwards. Meanwhile, participation among girls in football mirrors the Ulster average almost exactly across all age groups.



In contrast, young people's participation in Hurling and Camogie is markedly higher in Antrim compared to the rest of Ulster. At the FUNdamentals level (up to age 6), Antrim clubs see more than twice as many boys and girls picking up a hurl than clubs elsewhere in the province. This elevated rate of participation continues across all age groups, with consistently higher numbers of boys and girls engaging in Hurling and Camogie in Antrim.

It is also noteworthy that the overall number of girls participating in both Gaelic football and Camogie remains lower than the corresponding figure for boys in Gaelic football and Hurling. Additionally, Figures 5 and 6 highlight a noticeable decline in participation at the under-16 and under-18 levels compared to younger age groups. This trend aligns with participation patterns seen in other sports in Ireland and internationally. However, it is possible that some of this drop-off reflects players choosing to specialise in one code over the other at a critical stage in their development.

At the senior level, participation patterns mirror those seen in the juvenile age groups. In Gaelic football, the number of male and female participants is close to the provincial average, albeit slightly lower. However, in Hurling and Camogie, senior-level participation is significantly higher in Antrim than in the rest of Ulster, though Gaelic football remains the more popular sport overall. Additionally, there continue to be more male than female participants across both codes.

Figure 5 - Average number of participants per club - boys

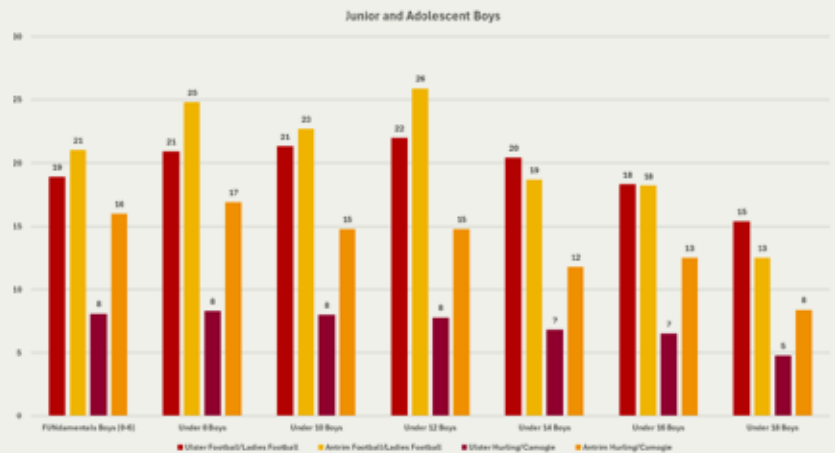


Figure 6 - Average Number of Participants per Club - Girls

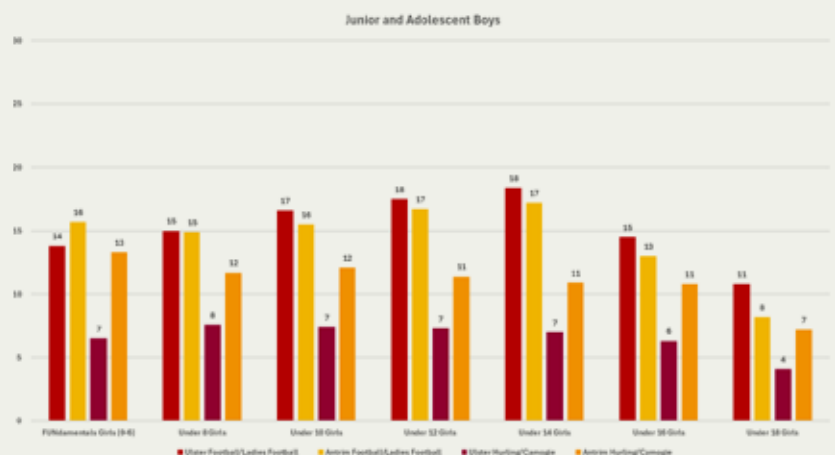
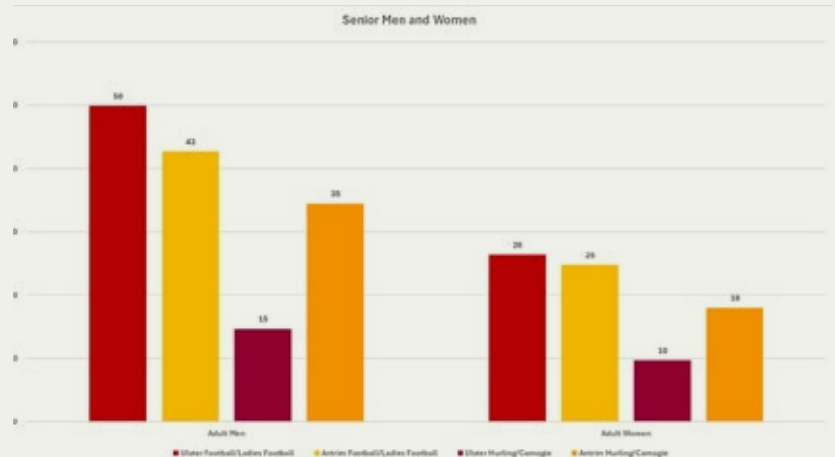


Figure 7 - Average number of participants per club, adults



Given the concerns raised in the consultation survey regarding coach development, it is interesting to note how Antrim provision compares with that of Ulster as a whole. Figure 8 shows the average number of coaches per club in the two major codes. The number of coaches reflects the pattern of participation, with provision for Gaelic football matching the provincial picture, while there is a higher level of coaching support for Hurling and Camogie in Antrim than in the rest of Ulster.

The proportion of coaches with accredited qualifications provides a strong indication of the coaching quality within Antrim clubs. Figure 9 shows that, with the exception of Level 1 Gaelic football, Antrim has a higher proportion of qualified coaches at all levels compared to the Ulster average. Notably, Hurling and Camogie have a significantly higher proportion of coaches qualified at Foundation, Level 1, and Level 2. Additionally, Antrim boasts a higher completion rate of safeguarding training for coaches across all levels, underscoring its commitment to safe and effective coaching practices.

The availability of match officials serves as a valuable indicator of the strength of the volunteer workforce. Figure 10 highlights the situation for both Gaelic football and Hurling/Camogie. Interestingly, while the number of Gaelic football coaches in Antrim clubs is close to the provincial average, there is a notable shortage of referees compared to the Ulster average. In contrast, the figures for Hurling and Camogie indicate a stronger position in Antrim, with a higher number of referees at all levels.

Figure 8 - Average number of Coaches per Club, by Code

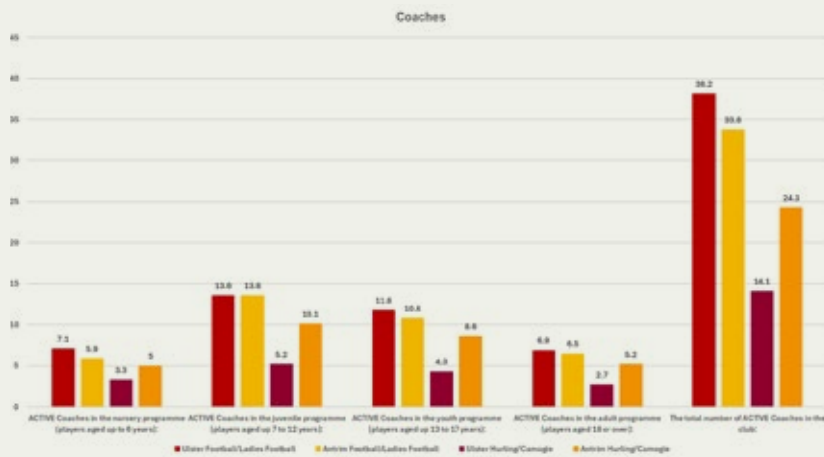


Figure 9 - Coach Qualifications per Club, by code

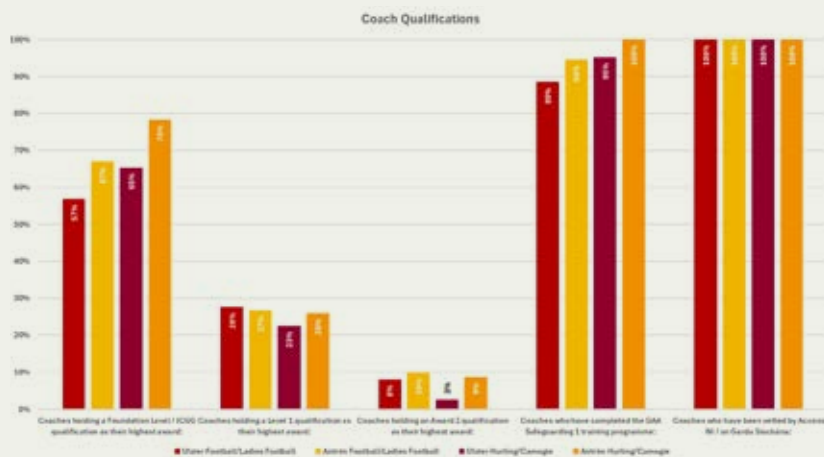
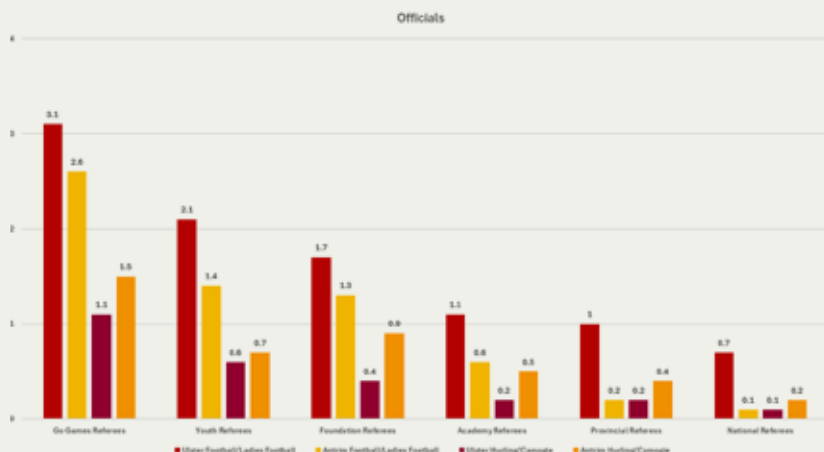


Figure 10 - Average Number of Officials per Club, by Code



Overall, the workforce in Antrim is slightly larger than in the rest of Ulster, with clubs supported by an average of 75 volunteers compared to the provincial average of 73. Together, these data suggest that, despite concerns raised in the consultation survey,

there is no immediate cause for concern regarding the current state of participation and coaching in Antrim. However, the audit findings will require further examination to gain a deeper understanding of the current landscape and future trends.

Gaelfast Membership Survey 2020/2021 Findings

The findings of the consultation survey and club audit are particularly insightful when considered alongside the baseline data from the Gaelfast membership survey of 2020-21. That research established several patterns that the recent data appear to confirm:

Participation:

Gaelic football participation aligns closely with the Ulster average, while hurling and camogie are well above. Gaelic football remains the more popular sport overall, and boys outnumber girls in both major codes.

Volunteer Workforce:

Antrim has a large, well-qualified volunteer base, presenting significant potential for further growth in participation.

Redevelopment of Casement Park:

There is strong support among Antrim members and participants for completing the Casement Park redevelopment.

Irish Language and Culture:

Interest in Irish language and culture is notable, though some clubs face challenges in building capacity to support growth.

Financial Health:

Most clubs are financially stable generally operating with a small surplus.

Facility Access:

Access to facilities is a pressing issue, particularly for clubs based in Belfast.

A key finding from the baseline survey was the strong desire among respondents for equality in provision and support across the major codes. Antrim's traditional strength in Hurling and Camogie is affirmed by the latest participation numbers, though Gaelic football remains the more popular code overall. The delicate balance between these two codes, as highlighted in the baseline study, continues to be a critical issue for the county to address, alongside gender equality among participants and volunteers. Notably, while access to GAA facilities and officials was identified as a barrier to female participation in Gaelic Games, this was highlighted several years before the announcement of the governing body integration process.



Alignment with Relevant Strategies

In shaping our Strategic Plan, we have invested considerable time in 'horizon scanning'- not only to define the future direction of our organisation but to actively align with and contribute to the strategic priorities of government departments and agencies responsible for sport, and physical activity. By doing so, we position Antrim GAA as a key player in driving positive change and enhancing the health and well-being of our communities.

As a volunteer-led organisation, we are deeply aware of the importance of taking a broader approach to sports development, showcasing the value and impact Gaelic Games bring to the wider community. By expanding our perspective, we aim to reduce reliance on traditional funding streams, diversify income opportunities, and build greater financial resilience. This approach will ensure long-term sustainability and strengthen our capacity to adapt to future challenges. The key strategies identified are outlined as follows:

GAA Strategic Plan 2022-2026 - Aontas 2026 - Towards One GAA for All sets out a vision to create a sustainable, community-based, and volunteer-led organisation. Its goal is to maximise participation in Gaelic Games and culture while fostering unity and inclusivity. The key priorities outlined in the plan include *increasing participation across all roles, ensuring the long-term resilience of the association, promoting unity across the six codes of Gaelic Games, fostering a connected and inclusive environment, and upholding strong governance practices throughout the GAA.*

Antrim GAA's strategic plan aligns with these national objectives but also focuses on addressing specific local needs. The emphasis will be on enhancing participation by providing support for clubs, teams, and players to reach their full potential. Additionally, the plan seeks to build a sustainable framework by strengthening community infrastructure and ensuring the vitality of clubs. It also aims to promote all codes of Gaelic Games within Antrim, while fostering inclusivity and a keen sense of community. Good governance will be a central priority, ensuring transparency and accountability across all activities.



Ulster GAA Strategic Plan 2024-2028 - A Future for All outlines five strategic themes aimed at strengthening Ulster GAA as the province's leading amateur sporting, cultural, and community organisation. These key themes include: *Coaching and Games*; *Club and Community*; *Governance and Safeguarding*; *Communication and Branding*, and; *Infrastructure and Sustainability*.

Our Strategic Plan aligns closely with these priorities. In *Coaching and Games*, we are focused on enhancing participation and performance, supporting players, coaches, and officials to reach their full potential. Under *Club and Community*, we share a commitment to fostering inclusivity, building strong club structures, and strengthening the sense of community.

Our emphasis on *Governance and Safeguarding* mirrors Ulster GAA's focus on embedding robust governance practices, ensuring transparency, and safeguarding all members. In the area of *Communication and Branding*, we will work to improve our outreach, ensuring that our activities and successes are communicated effectively, both locally and across the province.

Draft Programme for Government 2024-2027 - Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most Programme for Government 2024-27 outlines several immediate priorities - *Cut Health Waiting Times*, *Ending Violence Against Women and Girls*, *Grow a Globally Competitive and Sustainable Economy*, *Protecting Lough Neagh and the Environment*, *Reform and Transformation of Public Services*, *Provide More Social, Affordable and Sustainable Housing*, *Deliver More Affordable Childcare*, *Better Support for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs*, and *Safer Communities*. While sport and physical activity are not directly identified under these immediate priorities, the contribution they can make directly and indirectly to the economy, health, and the lives of children and young people has been well documented in previous government strategies and plans.

The Programme for Government does however identify specific commitments to sport under the themes of '*Building New Foundations*' and '*Shaping a Better Tomorrow*':

1: Sport can be life-changing and has the potential to build strong relationships across communities. Building on our stadia and interest in sports here, we want to maximise sports' potential for community wellbeing and to support physical and mental health. That is why we will continue to work with the UK Government and other funders to finish our regional stadia programme. We will make progress on the redevelopment of Casement Park and initiate investments in sub-regional and grassroots sports. These investments

will ensure they act as focal points for our communities, both now and in the future, and make sure we can host events that draw in international audiences.

2: We will also prioritise sports and physical activity to tackle obesity, which currently costs our health service £500 million each year. These efforts will be tailored to reflect the needs of our increasingly diverse and aging population. Our investments in new outdoor recreation and sporting facilities will help to ensure we provide quality and modern focal points for our communities and that we can help people to enjoy active social lives. Both now and in the future, these will be assets for everyone and help to ensure that we can host events which draw international audiences.

Antrim GAA's plans and programmes will align with these commitments, showcasing its significant contributions to health, inclusion, and social cohesion through capital investment and our approach to increased levels of engagement and involvement in Gaelic Games.

Department for Communities – Active Living - Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for Northern Ireland (2022) envisions a society where lifelong participation in sport and physical activity promotes an active, healthy, resilient, and inclusive community. The strategy is organised around six key themes.

The first theme, *Recovery*, focuses on addressing the impact of the pandemic on sport and physical activity. *Participation, Inclusion, and Community Engagement* seeks to encourage widespread involvement and ensure inclusivity for all. *Excellence in Sport* is aimed at fostering ambitious standards and achievements across all levels of sport. The fourth theme, *Partnership and Integration*, emphasises the importance of collaboration and integrated approaches to sport development. *Inclusive and Shared Spaces* focuses on developing accessible and welcoming facilities, and *Benefits of Sport and Physical Activity* highlight the numerous advantages, from health to social benefits.

These key themes are further supported by three cross-cutting principles: *Developing Inclusive, Shared Communities*, which promotes environments where everyone can participate; *Developing Capacity and Governance*, which enhances skills, structures, and oversight; and *Developing National and International Linkages*, which aims to strengthen local and global collaborations.

Antrim GAA's plans and programmes will align with these themes and principles, showcasing its significant contributions to health, inclusion, and social cohesion.

Sport Northern Ireland Corporate Plan – The Power of Sport (2020-25) focuses on two key outcomes: *Increased Participation* and *Elite Performance*. The Plan aims to encourage sustained engagement in sport and recreation, while also positioning athletes from the North of Ireland among the best in the world.

In developing our *Strategic Framework*, the primary focus will be on *Outcome 1: Increased Participation*, which will guide our sports development actions and targets. It is essential that we demonstrate how our sport contributes to this outcome by encouraging more people to get involved in sport and recreation.

Sport Northern Ireland's Corporate Plan outlines three key approaches to achieve these outcomes. The first is *Strategic Influence and Partnership Building*, which emphasises establishing and nurturing partnerships to drive progress. The second is *Expertise Delivery*, providing specialised knowledge and support to enhance both performance and development. The third is *Outcome-Focussed Investment*, ensuring that resources are allocated effectively to deliver measurable results.

These approaches are incorporated into our Strategic Plan, with a firm commitment to accountability. We will adopt an outcome-based approach to ensure the successful delivery of the Plan's objectives, focusing on measurable impacts and continuous improvement.

Our Strategic Response

Antrim GAA is thrilled to unveil our new Strategic Plan, a bold roadmap that will guide our organisation over the next five years. Our vision is ambitious, and we are eager to rally the support and active involvement of all our stakeholders as we work together to achieve the outcomes, objectives, and targets set out in this Plan.

While the Plan does not dictate every specific action, it provides a clear and visionary framework for growth and excellence. It highlights key priorities and establishes the strategic direction we will follow. A dedicated Strategy Implementation Committee will oversee the execution of this plan, monitoring progress closely and conducting a mid-point review in June 2028.

Our immediate focus is turning this vision into reality. The first year (2025-2026) will be about revitalising operations and laying the foundation for future success, while the subsequent four years (2026-2030) will concentrate on driving strategic growth and development across the county.

We are committed to working in close partnership with key stakeholders and collaborators to ensure we have the right people, volunteers, and leaders in place to deliver on our priorities. By fostering strong, collaborative relationships, we will build a resilient and dynamic organisation that not only meets but exceeds expectations.



Together, we will pave the way for excellence - promoting Gaelic Games, the Irish language, and our cultural heritage throughout the county. Our shared efforts will unite everyone passionate about our county, driving growth, and inspiring participation at every level. Through this collective commitment, we will elevate Antrim GAA and deepen the impact of Gaelic Games in our communities.



5. OUR VISION, MISSION, VALUES & OUTCOMES

FÍS, MISEAN & LUACHANNA

Vision

An inclusive, vibrant, and united Antrim GAA community that inspires lifelong participation, empowers our clubs, and fosters a lasting legacy of success for future generations.

Mission

Our mission is to foster a culture of inclusivity and excellence by inspiring active involvement at all levels, building the capacity of our clubs and leaders, and sustaining the long-term growth of Antrim GAA. Through collaboration and innovation, we will strengthen our clubs and communities, ensuring that Antrim GAA thrives both on and off the field.

Le Chéile le hAghaidh 2030

Values

We have set ourselves an ambitious and transformative vision for the future. As we build momentum, it will be vital to lean on the core values that bring unity and purpose to our efforts. With our people as our greatest strength, these values will guide how we work together to achieve our shared vision.

Following meaningful consultations with Coiste Bainistí, staff, and the wider GAA community, six key themes emerged that capture the spirit and culture of Antrim GAA. These values will shape how we lead, collaborate, and engage:

Inclusive

We respect, welcome, and embrace diversity across all levels of our organisation, ensuring that every person feels valued and has the opportunity to contribute.

Transparent

We are committed to acting with honesty, fairness, and responsibility, upholding the highest standards in everything we do.

Inspirational

We lead with passion and purpose, motivating our members and communities to strive for excellence, both on and off the field.

Collaborative

We believe in the power of teamwork. Together, we achieve more by fostering cooperation and mutual support across all clubs and committees.

Accountable

We engage openly with our members, ensuring clear communication and fostering trust through honesty and accountability.

United

We are united in our vision for a strong future. Through innovative thinking and shared goals, we build a thriving Antrim GAA community that is ready to face the challenges of tomorrow.

As we implement our Strategic Plan, Antrim GAA will evolve and grow. We will regularly review our vision, mission, and values to ensure they align with our goal of being a vibrant, inclusive, and amateur volunteer-led organisation.

Strategic Outcomes

Figure 11 outlines the six strategic outcomes of our plan, detailing their intended effects and the methods by which we will measure their success.

Figure 11 – Antrim GAA Strategic Outcomes

Outcome 1: INSPIRED COMMUNITY AND SUSTAINED HERITAGE

WE WILL:	RESULTING IN:	MEASURED BY:
Increase participation in Scór Sinsear and Scór na nÓg, integrate the Irish language across all initiatives, promote and celebrate our cultural heritage, and actively support the health and wellbeing of communities, with a focus on young people.	A vibrant and inclusive environment that strengthens cultural identity and fosters personal development.	Increased engagement rates, improved community wellbeing indicators, and the growth of Irish language usage across activities.

Outcome 2: A HIGH PERFORMING AND ACCOUNTABLE ORGANISATION

WE WILL:	RESULTING IN:	MEASURED BY:
Improve how we govern Antrim GAA leading by example, working in partnership with all interested parties, communicating better, and implementing a sound financial strategy.	An organisation that is trusted, accountable and works to the highest professional standards and demonstrates leadership to all key stakeholders, including funders, clubs and members.	Governance audits and continuous monitoring of satisfaction through stakeholder feedback and membership consultation.

Outcome 3: EMPOWERED VOLUNTEERS

WE WILL:	RESULTING IN:	MEASURED BY:
Meaningfully engage and empower coaches, officials, and administrators (Club and County) by offering ongoing personal and professional development opportunities that inspire and motivate them to excel in their roles.	Improved skills and confidence, cultivating a positive environment, resulting in enhanced club and county performance and retention of volunteers.	Participant feedback, attendance at training sessions, and increased levels of engagement within clubs and county.

Outcome 4: INCREASED PARTICIPATION

WE WILL:	RESULTING IN:	MEASURED BY:
Maximise opportunities for a diverse range of children, young people, and adults across County Antrim to enjoy, engage, and excel in Gaelic Games, fostering inclusivity and broadening participation at all levels.	Increased levels of participation, improved retention of players within clubs, and a vibrant and inclusive culture of Gaelic Games throughout the county.	New players actively engaged and involved in Gaelic Games year-on-year.

Outcome 5: ENHANCED CLUBS AND FACILITIES

WE WILL:	RESULTING IN:	MEASURED BY:
Maintain and develop our grounds, support clubs with facility development plans, improve access to all our facilities, and create a safe and welcoming environment for members, coaches, volunteers and the wider community.	Increase the capacity, usage, and spectator attendance at county and club facilities to support higher levels of participation, training, and competition.	Ongoing monitoring of pitches and facilities strategy to identify new projects that address needs and demands within the county.

Outcome 6: SUCCESSFUL TALENT & PERFORMANCE PATHWAYS

WE WILL:	RESULTING IN:	MEASURED BY:
Collaborate with National GAA, Ulster GAA, and other key stakeholders to establish an inclusive athlete-centred pathway that connects talented young players with opportunities to reach their full potential.	The identification and development of talented players from clubs, schools and further and higher education institutions.	Progression of players through the pathway, participation in high performance programmes, and feedback from players and coaches on the effectiveness of the system.

CLUBS CLUBANNA



**Ghaeil
Chluanaidh**



**Glen
Rovers**



**Naomh
Brid**



**All Saints GAC,
Ballymena**



**Ciceam
Ard Eoin**



**Con Magee's
Glenravel**



**Glenariffe
Oisin CLG**



**Kickhams GAC
Creggan**



**Lamh
Dhearg**



**Laochra
Loch Lao**



**Loughbeg
Harps**



**Na
Piarasigh**



**Naomh Brid Cloiche
An Mhuillinn**



**Naomh
Comhghall CLG**



**Naomh
Eoin**



**Naomh
Gall**



**Naomh Muire
Achadh Eochaille**



**Naomh Padraig
(North Antrim)**



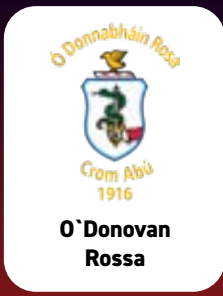
**Naomh Padraig
Lisburn**



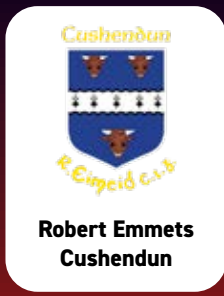
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/ St Joseph's**



**Naomh Treasa CLG
/ St Teresa's GAC**



**O'Donovan
Rossa**



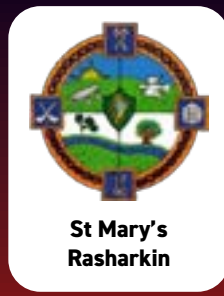
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Cushendun**



**Roger Casements
Portglenone**



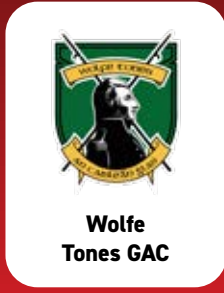
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Malachy's**



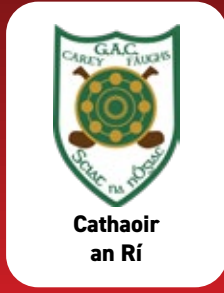
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Rasharkin**



**St. Mary's
Aghagallon**



**Wolfe
Tones GAC**



**Cathaoir
an Rí**



**Clann na
hÉireann Carraigín**



**CLG
MacDaibhéid**



**CLG
Uí Dhonaill**



**Cuchullains
Dun Lathaí**



**Éire
Óg**



**Gort na
Móna CLG**



**Latharna
Óg**



**Loch Mór
Dál gCais GAC**



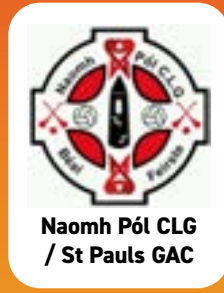
**Mac
Uílin CLG**



**Naomh
Éanna CLG**



**Naomh Eargnait,
Muine Glás**



**Naomh Pól CLG
/ St Pauls GAC**



**Naomh
Séamas**



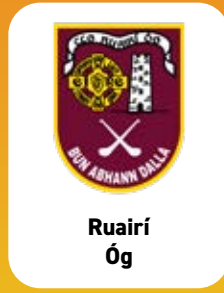
**Naomh Úna CLG
/ St Agnes' GAC**



**Na
Seamróga**



**Pádraig
Sáirseil CLG**



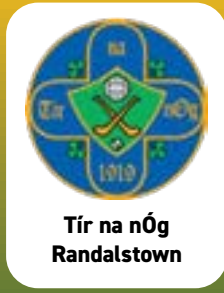
**Ruairí
Óg**



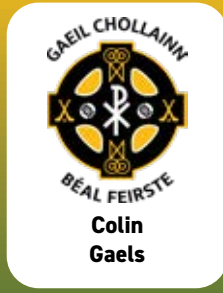
**Seán Uí
Mhistéil**



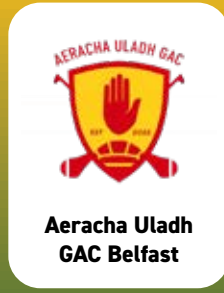
**Shane
Uí Néill**



**Tír na nÓg
Randalstown**



**Colin
Gaels**



**Aeracha Uladh
GAC Belfast**

6.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK AND OBJECTIVES

CREATLACH STRAITÉISEACH, TORTHAÍ & CUSPÓIRÍ

From the research conducted and the extensive consultation and stakeholder engagement, we have gathered invaluable feedback that has been instrumental in shaping the Strategic Framework for this Plan (as illustrated in Figure 12).

This Framework integrates a series of cohesive and interrelated components and will drive our collective efforts, providing a structured and informed pathway to achieving our outcomes and maximising our impact across the county.



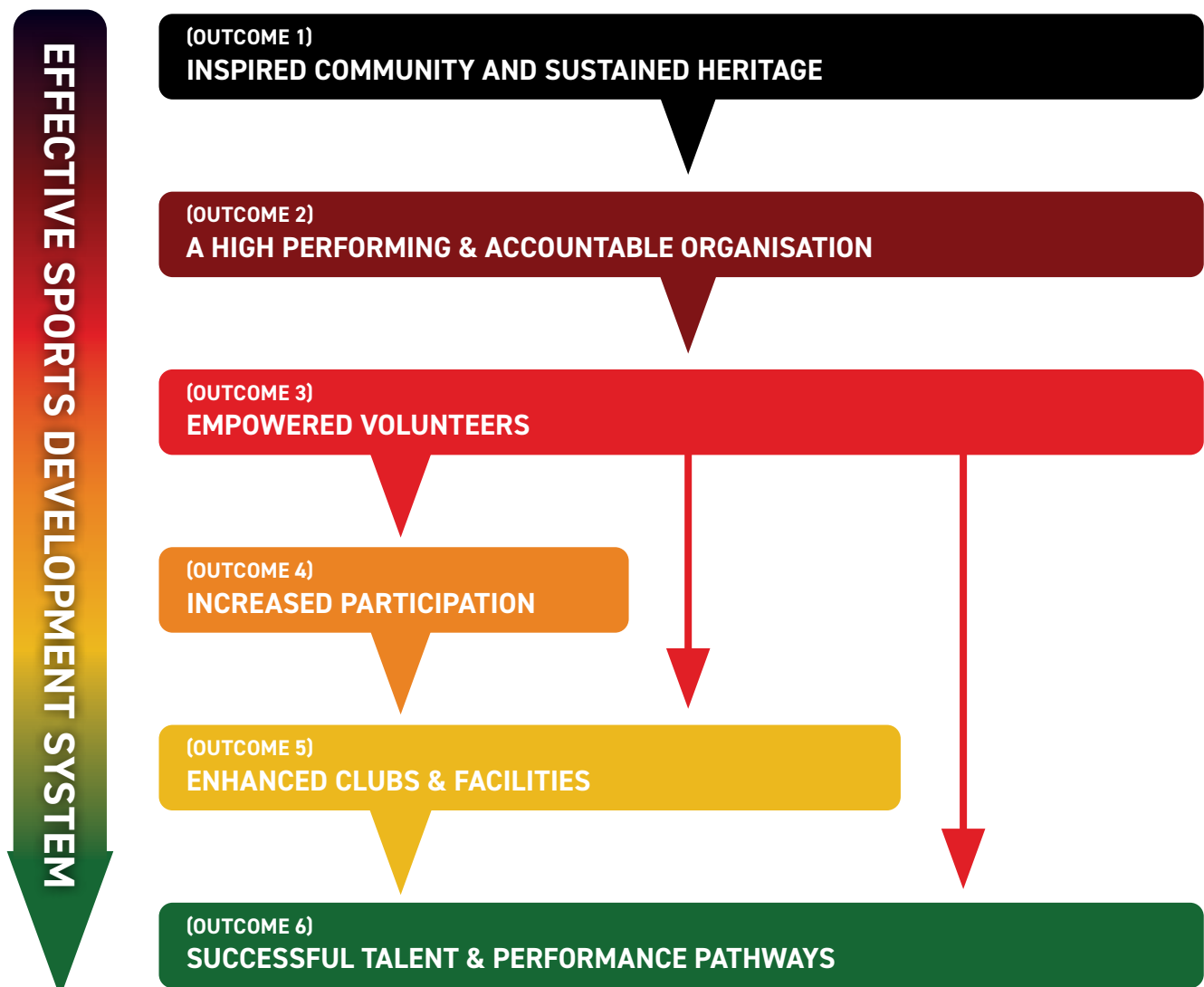


VISION

An inclusive, vibrant, and united Antrim GAA community that inspires lifelong participation, empowers our clubs, and fosters a lasting legacy of success for future generations.

Figure 12

Strategic Framework for Antrim GAA's Strategic Plan



Achieving these Strategic Outcomes will require the development of annual Operational Plans, with appropriate resourcing to ensure progress is regularly measured and reported. A detailed description of each Strategic Outcome, including its Activities, Objectives, and Measures of

Success, is provided below. Baselines and targets related to these outcomes will be included in a separate Strategy Implementation and Reporting Framework designed to monitor and track progress.

STRATEGIC OUTCOME 1: INSPIRED COMMUNITY AND SUSTAINED HERITAGE

WE WILL:

Increase participation in Scór Sinsear and Scór na nÓg, integrate the Irish language across all initiatives, promote and celebrate our cultural heritage, and actively support the health and wellbeing of communities, with a focus on young people.

RESULTING IN:

A vibrant and inclusive environment that strengthens cultural identity and fosters personal development.

MEASURED BY:

Increased engagement rates, improved community wellbeing indicators, and the growth of Irish language usage across activities.

	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
SCÓR	Scór Co-ordinators	Encourage and support clubs to appoint a dedicated Scór coordinator to promote and manage Scór activities.	Number of active Scór co-ordinators operating across the county.
	Scór Sinsear & Scór na Óg	Establish active Scór and Scór na Óg groups in every club across the county.	Percentage of clubs creating active Scór and Scór na Óg groups.
	Partnerships with Other Counties	Foster positive partnerships with Down, Armagh, and Derry to organise non-competitive Scór events.	Number of joint Scór events organised annually, providing year-round cultural engagement opportunities for participants across counties.
	Recognition of Scór Performers	Provide opportunities for Scór performers to showcase and be recognised for their talents at county and Gaelic Games events.	Number of events organised where Scór performers are featured and celebrated alongside major Gaelic Games occasions.
HISTORY	History and Culture Working Group	Establish a County History and Culture Working Group that will oversee all efforts to capture and promote the history and culture of Antrim GAA.	County History and Culture Working Group established.
	Antrim GAA 140th Anniversary	Organise a series of events to commemorate the 140th anniversary of Antrim GAA in 2025, including a celebratory gala, historical exhibitions, and community outreach programmes.	Programme of activities agreed and delivered targeting 1000 participants from clubs, schools, and local communities.
HEALTH & WELLBEING	GAA Healthy Clubs	Actively encourage and support clubs to become GAA Healthy Clubs in Antrim, promoting community well-being.	Number of clubs registered as GAA Healthy Clubs.
	Seminar Series	Deliver an annual Saffron Seminar Series addressing a range of health and well-being issues facing Antrim GAA members and the wider community.	Number of seminars delivered covering key health and well-being topics. Number of people attending planned seminars.
	Partnerships	Establish working partnerships with government departments, agencies, local councils, and registered charities to enhance community support and resources for Antrim GAA initiatives.	Number of collaborative programmes and initiatives launched.



	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
IRISH LANGUAGE	Irish Language Co-ordinators	Encourage and support clubs to appoint a dedicated Irish Language Officer to promote and integrate the Irish language throughout the club.	Percentage of clubs with an appointed Irish Language Officer to actively promote the use of Irish in all club activities.
	Visibility and Use of the Irish Language	Collaborate with Glór na nGael (through their Fondúireacht Sheosaimh Mhic Donncha Project) to enhance the visibility and usage of the Irish language within clubs and across all Antrim GAA digital platforms, fostering cultural heritage and promoting bilingualism throughout the GAA community.	Percentage of Irish language content on Antrim GAA's digital platforms tracked through analytics on social media, website posts, and email newsletters. Percentage of clubs engaged in promoting Irish language initiatives including bilingual signage, and regular use of Irish in communications.
	Participation in the Joe McDonagh Foundation	Encourage clubs within Antrim GAA to actively participate in the Fondúireacht Sheosaimh Mhic Dhonnacha to access valuable supports and benefits aimed at enhancing club development and community engagement.	Number of Antrim GAA clubs participating in the Fondúireacht Sheosaimh Mhic Dhonnacha ensuring that each club leverages the foundation's resources to enhance development and community engagement initiatives.
	Partnerships	Establish a strategic partnership with Foras NaGaelige, Conradh NaGaelige, Liofa and local council programmes aimed at developing the use of the Irish Language.	Formulate and formalise a strategic partnership with Foras NaGaelige, Conradh NaGaelige, Liofa, and local council programmes, resulting in at least three collaborative initiatives focused on promoting and developing the use of the Irish language within the Antrim GAA community.
	Access to the Gaeltacht Bursary Scheme	Expand and promote the Gaeltacht Bursary Scheme supporting people who wish to attend a summer Gaeltacht.	Number of club members receiving financial support attend a summer Gaeltacht.
VOICE OF YOUNG PEOPLE	Saffron Youth Forum	Create a Saffron Youth Forum representing 13-18-year-olds across County Antrim to provide a platform for young members to contribute to the development of Gaelic Games and community activities.	Number of youth-led initiatives and events successfully delivered.

STRATEGIC OUTCOME 2:

A HIGH PERFORMING AND ACCOUNTABLE ORGANISATION

WE WILL:

Improve how we govern Antrim GAA leading by example, working in partnership with all interested parties, communicating better, and implementing a sound financial strategy.

RESULTING IN:

An organisation that is trusted, accountable and works to the highest professional standards and demonstrates leadership to all key stakeholders, including funders, clubs, and members.

MEASURED BY:

Governance audits and continuous monitoring of satisfaction through stakeholder feedback and membership consultation.

	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
FINANCIAL STRATEGY	Sponsorship & Commercial Agreements	Secure further sponsorship and commercial agreements using our brand identity to engender private sector interest and continue to collaborate with the Saffron Business Forum and Cumann Sóisialta Mhic Ásmaint.	Commercial Working Group established to develop a comprehensive Sponsorship Policy that maximises revenue opportunities, aligns with the organisation's values, and strengthens partnerships. Percentage of income generated from commercial deals.
	Public Sector Grants	Identify and apply for central and local government grants that are mutually beneficial.	Grants Working Group, as part of the Finance Committee, established to identify, secure, and manage funding opportunities. Percentage of income generated from external grants.
	Core Funding for Coaching & Games Development	Sustain core funding for Antrim GAA's Coaching and Games Development Team (Gaelfast) to support Coaching and Games Development across Belfast and County Antrim.	Successful funding submission to GAA to sustain the programme for a further five years.
	Reinvesting in the Future	Generate sufficient revenue to sustainably resource Antrim GAA activities and capital projects.	Annual Accounts surpluses reinvested in grassroots and facilities sinking fund and financial reserves.
COMMUNICATION	Meaningful Engagement with Stakeholders	Deliver clear, consistent, and regular messaging to effectively promote our product to members, stakeholders, and target audiences.	Communication and Engagement Strategy developed, including a refreshed brand identity, to enhance its profile, unify messaging across clubs, and foster stronger connections with members, stakeholders, and the wider community.
	Resourcing Communications	Increase the capability and capacity of the Communications team.	PR, Marketing and Communications Working Group established to develop and implement a comprehensive Communication and Engagement Strategy.
PARTNERSHIPS	Integration	Work in partnership with Handball, LGFA and Camogie to move towards 'One Association' for Gaelic Games in Antrim.	Integration Working Group established to develop an Antrim Integration Strategy, fostering collaboration and inclusivity across all Gaelic games codes.
	New Partnerships	Develop new strategic partnerships with relevant external organisations.	Number of engagements and agreements with a ranges of government departments, agencies and organisations that share mutual strategic objectives.

“Success is a culture of wanting to be better. Things need to change in our senior set up. Higher standards and a more disciplined approach.”



LEADING BY EXAMPLE

ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
Running the Business	Demonstrate sustainability, transparency, and effectiveness in running the business of Antrim GAA.	Annual internal Governance Review and quinquennial external Governance Review completed.
Information Management Systems	Develop an evidence-based performance management system of reporting against strategic objectives.	Existing management information datasets identified and used to support the monitoring and evaluation of strategic progress.
Safeguarding Practices	Be fully compliant with GAA Safeguarding policy and any relevant statutory legislation.	Annual completion of the GAA Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment and prominent display of the Child Safeguarding Statements across all clubs and facilities.
Governance Structures	Operate to Governance best practice through all of our decision-making policies and procedures.	Organisational Structure reviewed and Policies & Procedures Manual updated in line with the GAA Governance Guide.
Staffing Structures	Develop a professional staffing structure capable of meeting the current and future needs of Antrim GAA.	Revised staffing structure implemented to meet the needs of Antrim GAA.

STRATEGIC OUTCOME 3: EMPOWERED VOLUNTEERS

WE WILL:

Meaningfully engage and empower coaches, officials, and administrators (Club and County) by offering ongoing personal and professional development opportunities that inspire and motivate them to excel in their roles.

RESULTING IN:

Improved skills and confidence, cultivating a positive environment, resulting in enhanced club and county performance and retention of volunteers.

MEASURED BY:

Participant feedback, attendance at training sessions, and increased levels of engagement within clubs and county.

	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
CLUB ADMINISTRATORS	Club Officer Roles & Responsibilities Support	Ensure all Club Officers understand their roles and responsibilities in providing opportunities and support for club members.	Number of club officers participating in role-specific training sessions per year.
	Succession Planning	Collaborate with National GAA and Ulster GAA to create a club guide for succession planning to ensure continuity during role transitions.	Complete and distribute the succession planning guide to all clubs.
	Maximise the Use of Foireann	Encourage and support clubs to fully exploit Foireann as an effective tool for managing membership information.	Percentage of clubs actively using the system for membership management, tracked through system analytics and club feedback.
	Reduce the Burden on Club Administrators	Conduct a survey of club officers to identify potential solutions for reducing the administrative burden on club volunteers.	Completion of the survey within the next 6-8 months to inform at least 3 initiatives to alleviate administrative tasks within the following year.
	Club Development Planning	Increase Antrim GAA's capacity to implement the GAA's Club Planning Programme by recruiting and retaining Club Planning Facilitators.	Number of new Club Planning Facilitators recruited. Number of clubs with up-to-date Club Development Plans in place, tracked annually.
	Promotion of Club Maith and/or Club Compás	Promote participation in Club Maith and/or Club Compás to assess and improve club effectiveness.	Percentage of clubs participating in Club Maith or Club Compás, tracked annually.

“The demands on volunteers time are now endless and we need to ensure the time they have is spent on skill development.”





COACHING

ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
Coaching & Games Development ⁴	Collaborate with National GAA and Ulster GAA to review Antrim GAA's coaching and games development approach and staffing structure, ensuring that it aligns with and meets the needs of the priorities identified in this Strategic Plan.	Completion of the review and submission of a report with actionable recommendations.
Coaching Review	Conduct a comprehensive review of coaching within the county to establish a baseline for the number of active coaches.	Completion of the review within the next 6-8 months to inform future coaching development initiatives.
Club Coaching Officer Forum	Collaborate with Divisional Boards to facilitate a Club Coaching Officers Forum that provides regular opportunities for learning, sharing best practices, and discussing challenges and solutions.	Number of Club Coaching Officer Forum meetings planned and facilitated each year.
Saffron Coach Pathway (SCP)	Collaborate with National GAA and Ulster GAA to design and implement a Saffron Coach Pathway (SCP) that outlines the knowledge, skills, and competencies required to support players at different stages of the Gaelic Games Player Pathway.	Saffron Coach Pathway successfully developed and communicated to all relevant stakeholders.
Active Club Coaches	Increase the number of qualified and active club coaches across the county.	Number of certified (Foundation, A1, A2 & A3) active coaches operating across the county.
Saffron Coach Development Academy (SCDA)	Collaborate with Ulster GAA and Stadium Community Benefits Initiative (SCBI) to establish a Saffron Coach Development Academy (SCDA) to provide club coaches with opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills through workshops, training sessions, and mentorship programmes.	Launch of the SCDA within the next year. Number of club coaches engaged and positively impacted by the SCDA.
Allocation of Award 1 Coaches within Clubs	Mandate that all Antrim GAA clubs have a minimum of one Award 1 Coach involved with each of their teams by the start of the next season.	Number of clubs that have appointed Award 1 coaches for all their teams.
Saffron Coaching & Games Development Conference	Plan and deliver a biennial Saffron Coaching and Games Development Conference to provide coaches, officials, and club administrators with valuable insights, resources, and networking opportunities.	Successfully organise and deliver a Saffron Coaching and Games Development Conference within the next 18-24 months, aiming for a minimum attendance of 200 participants. Percentage of attendees reporting an overall satisfaction rating of 8 or higher.
New Partnerships	Collaborate with Ulster GAA to establish partnerships with at least three further and higher education institutions to offer professional certification programmes for coach education and development.	Partnership agreements established and maintained.





	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
OFFICIALS	Saffron Referee Development Academy (SRDA)	Collaborate with Ulster GAA and Stadium Community Benefits Initiative (SCBI) and establish the Saffron Referee Development Academy (SRDA) to recruit, develop, and retain more referees.	Launch the SRDA within the next year. Number of new referees recruited and developed through the SRDA.
	Referee Mentors	Recruit experienced and retired referees to act as Referee Mentors for participants in the Saffron Referee Development Academy (SRDA).	Number of experienced and/or retired referees recruited to enhance the developed of referees involved in the SRDA.
	Rules and Respect Education	Provide education to players, team officials, and parents on the rules of the game and the RESPECT initiatives through Rules and Respect Seminars (R&RS).	Number of R&RS's delivered. Number of players, team officials and parents attending R&RS to enhance understanding and promote a positive sporting environment.
	Club & Referee Recognition	Recognise and reward clubs that actively engage in referee development activities in Belfast and across the county.	Establish a recognition programme within the 12-16 months to incentivise participation. Number of clubs recognised and rewarded for their engagement in reference development activities.

STRATEGIC OUTCOME 4: INCREASED PARTICIPATION

WE WILL:

Maximise opportunities for a diverse range of children, young people, and adults across county Antrim to enjoy, engage, and excel in Gaelic Games, fostering inclusivity and broadening participation at all levels.

RESULTING IN:

Increased levels of participation, improved retention of players within clubs, and a vibrant and inclusive culture of Gaelic Games throughout the county.

MEASURED BY:

New players actively engaged and involved in Gaelic Games year-on-year.

	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
HURLING & FOOTBALL DEVELOPMENT	Hurling & Football Sub-Committees	Collaborate with National GAA and Ulster GAA to establish two independent Sub-Committees to oversee the development of Hurling and Football in Belfast and across the county.	Hurling & Football Sub-Committees established within six months, with at least five active members representing various clubs.
	Audit of Current Provisions	Conduct an audit of current Hurling and Football provisions across the county to establish a comprehensive overview of resources, participation levels, and areas for improvement.	Complete the audit within six months, providing a detailed report on facilities, coaching, and participation. Use the findings to develop targeted initiatives, with progress measured by increased participation and improved resource allocation.
	Action Plans	Develop two separate Action Plans with measurable outcomes to support the development of Hurling and Football in Belfast and across the county.	Finalise and launch both Hurling and Football Action Plans within 12 months. Each plan will include at least five key initiatives, with progress measured through participation growth, improved coaching standards and facility enhancement.
	Investment & Support	Collaborate with National GAA and Ulster GAA to secure the necessary investment and support to implement the Hurling and Football Action Plans.	Funding and resources secured to support the implementation of agreed Actions Plans.

“The relationship with schools needs to be developed further and solidified.”



	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
PRIMARY SCHOOL PROVISION	Support from Coaching & Games Development Staff	Extend and enhance the primary school coaching programme in Belfast and across the county to increase participation and skill development at the grassroots level.	Number of primary schools supported by the coaching programme, tracked annually.
	Training and Support for Primary School Staff	Provide specific coach education and mentoring support to primary school staff within Belfast and across the county to build coaching capacity and enhance the delivery of Gaelic Games.	Number of primary school staff trained and mentored to increase their coaching capacity and improve the quality of Gaelic Games instruction.
	School Club-Links	Actively encourage and support the establishment and maintenance of strong school-club links in Belfast and across the county to foster greater youth participation in Gaelic Games.	Number of formal partnerships established between clubs and schools, tracked annually.
	Cumann Na mBunscol Aontroma	Collaborate with Cumann Na mBunscol Aontroma to design and implement a comprehensive programme of games aimed at supporting player development in primary schools.	Develop and launch the programme within 12 months. Number of primary schools participating, tracked annually.
POST-PRIMARY SCHOOL PROVISION	Saffron Schools of Excellence Initiative (SESI)	Collaborate with National GAA, Ulster GAA, and Ulster Schools to secure the necessary resources to support the appointment of Games Development staff in leading post-primary schools in Belfast and across the county.	Funding secured to contribute to the appointment Games Development staff in at least five key post-primary schools, with progress measured through increased participation, improved coaching standards, and enhanced Gaelic Games development in these schools.
	Training and Support for Primary School Staff	Provide specific coach education and mentoring support to post-primary school staff within Belfast and across the county to build coaching capacity and enhance the delivery of Gaelic Games.	Number of post-primary school staff trained and mentored to increase their coaching capacity and improve the quality of Gaelic Games instruction.
	Links with Talent Academies & Clubs	Establish and maintain effective links between schools, clubs, and the county to ensure players are managed and supported throughout their development.	Achieve the establishment of formal communication channels and collaborative programmes.
	Ulster Schools GAA	Work closely with Ulster Schools to coordinate schedules and avoid unnecessary complications or clashes with club and county activities.	Establish regular communication and planning meetings with Ulster Schools GAA. Number of clashes reported.

	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
FIXTURES AND COMPETITIONS	Club Fixtures & Competitions	Collaborate with Divisional Boards to plan, consult on, and deliver a meaningful programme of club fixtures and competitions for all players, coaches, and spectators to enhance.	Percentage of scheduled fixtures completed.
	Master Fixtures Plan Bi-Annual Reviews	Conduct biannual reviews of Antrim GAA's Master Fixtures Plan, ensuring at least 90% of scheduled games are played as planned and making necessary adjustments to enhance competitiveness and scheduling efficiency based on feedback from players and clubs.	Percentage of clubs and players with an overall satisfaction score of 8 or above.
	Promoting Positive Playing Environments	Collaborate with Divisional Boards and Cumann na mBunscol Aontroma to fully introduce 'silent sidelines' in Go Games, Under-12, and Primary Schools competitions to foster a positive playing environment.	Silent Sidelines' initiative implemented at Go Games, under-12, and primary school levels to promote a positive and supportive environment for young players. Percentage of parents and coaches reporting a more supportive and focused environment.
EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION	Pilot Youth Participation Initiatives	Collaborate with National GAA and Ulster GAA, to plan and deliver three 'pilot' initiatives designed to involve, engage, and retain youth participants.	At least three pilot initiatives implemented within 24 months. Number of participants actively engaged and involved.
	Engaging 'Non-traditional' Playing Communities	Be inclusive and reach out to 'non-traditional' playing communities across Belfast and the county to promote greater participation in Gaelic Games.	Engage with at least four non-traditional playing communities.
	GAA for All	Collaborate with Ulster GAA to increase the number of clubs within County Antrim offering GAA for All programmes, ensuring inclusivity for people of all abilities.	Number of clubs offering GAA for All programmes.





STRATEGIC OUTCOME 5: ENHANCED CLUBS AND FACILITIES

WE WILL:

Maintain and develop our grounds, support clubs with facility development plans, improve access to all our facilities, and create a safe and welcoming environment for members, coaches, volunteers, and the wider community.

RESULTING IN:

Increase the capacity, usage, and spectator attendance at county and club facilities to support higher levels of participation, training, and competition.

MEASURED BY:

Ongoing monitoring of pitches and facilities strategy to identify new projects that address needs and demands within the county.

	ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
COUNTY FACILITIES	Repair & Maintenance	Increase the economic use of existing facilities from reinvestment of surpluses in maintenance and repair.	Increased expenditure on grounds maintenance.
	Redevelopment of Casement Park	Redevelopment of Casement Park through continued support to the Casement Park Project Board.	Secured capital funding to develop a world-class stadium.
	Dunsilly Centre for Participation	Continue the phased completion of the Dunsilly Centre of Participation.	Secured capital funding to increase match capacity and annual usage by County Teams.
	Pitches Strategy for Gaelic Games	Review Club Audits to compile a Pitches Strategy and provide the evidence base for grant applications.	Level of unmet demand, investment required, and grants secured.
CLUB FACILITIES	Capital Project Guidance	Produce a Club Capital Project Guide to enable clubs to be 'shovel ready' when embarking on a major capital project.	Number of completed project business cases, technical plans, planning approvals secured.
	Support to Clubs	Provide ongoing support to clubs, engaged in the delivery of major capital projects to ensure projects are delivered to cost, time, quality and best practice.	Number of live capital projects supported.
	Facility Use Partnership Agreements	Increase the community use of local facilities through effective partnerships with schools, clubs, and local councils.	Annual usage and income generated from community use.
	Accessible Facilities	Support the development of facilities that are open, accessible, and fully inclusive to all members of the community.	Full compliance with legislation and best practice guidance e.g. Disability Sport NI Inclusive Sports Facilities.

STRATEGIC OUTCOME 6: SUCCESSFUL TALENT & PERFORMANCE PATHWAYS

WE WILL:

Collaborate with National GAA, Ulster GAA, and other key stakeholders to establish an inclusive athlete-centred pathway that connects talented young players with opportunities to reach their full potential.

RESULTING IN:

The identification and development of talented players from clubs, schools and further and higher education institutions.

MEASURED BY:

Progression of players through the pathway, participation in high performance programmes, and feedback from players and coaches on the effectiveness of the system.

ACTIVITY	OBJECTIVE	MEASURE OF SUCCESS
Talent Academy Review	Collaborate with National GAA and Ulster GAA to conduct an independent review of Antrim GAA's current Talent Academy structures to determine their effectiveness and areas for improvement.	Complete the independent review within six months, providing a detailed report with actionable recommendations.
Saffron Player & Talent Development Pathway	Develop, consult on, and launch a Saffron Player and Talent Development Pathway to ensure systematic player progression and enhanced talent identification across all age groups.	Finalise and launch the pathway within 12 months. Percentage of clubs and relevant stakeholders providing positive feedback on the consultation process.
Investment and Support	Collaborate with National GAA and Ulster GAA to secure appropriate funding levels to support the implementation of programmes addressing the recommendations from the independent review.	Percentage increase in funding secured for Player and Talent Development, aiming for a minimum of 10% increase annually, tracked through financial reports and funding applications.
Talent & Performance Development Lead	Appoint a suitably skilled and experienced Programme Lead within Antrim GAA's staffing structure to design and implement the Saffron Talent Development Programme.	Successfully appoint the Programme Lead within three months.
Saffron Talent Evolution Programme (S-TeP)	Plan and deliver a quality Saffron Talent Evolution Programme (S-TeP) that integrates the Antrim GAA's culture and values while achieving defined player developmental outcomes.	S-TeP designed and launched within 12 months
Links with Clubs, Post Primary Schools & Further and Higher Education Institutions	Establish and maintain effective links with clubs, post-primary schools, and further and higher education institutions to ensure players are managed and supported throughout their development.	Achieve the establishment of formal communication channels and collaborative programmes.

TALENT IDENTIFICATION & DEVELOPMENT



SENIOR TEAMS & HIGH PERFORMANCE SYSTEM

<p>High-Performance Investment and Support</p>	<p>Continue to invest in and support Antrim GAA's Senior Teams (Under 20, Senior) to meet training, performance targets, and developmental outcomes.</p>	<p>Secure and allocate appropriate funding and resources to meet 100% of the training and performance needs of Senior Teams.</p>
<p>Saffron High-Performance Development (S-HiP) Working Group</p>	<p>Establish a Saffron High-Performance (S-HiP) Working Group that leverages elite expertise to set realistic, data-informed goals for players, coaches, and staff, supporting the continuous development and achievement of high-performance standards within Antrim GAA.</p>	<p>S-HiP Working Group established within the next year.</p> <p>Percentage of high-performance targets achieved annually across player, coach, and staff development programmes, as defined by the S-HiP Working Group's goals and gap analysis.</p>
<p>Saffron High-Performance (S-HiP) Pathway Plan</p>	<p>Proactively identify and nurture high-performing players within Antrim GAA by establishing a comprehensive Saffron High-Performance (S-HiP) Pathway Plan, providing year-round physical, technical, and tactical development to prepare athletes for elite-level competition.</p>	<p>S-HiP Pathway Plan developed and approved within the next 12-18 months.</p> <p>Number of identified high performers actively participating in the S-HiP Pathway Plan, tracked annually.</p>



7. MANAGING OUR ORGANISATION & RESOURCING OUR PLAN

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Rising to the Challenge

The economic climate has changed dramatically since our last Strategic Plan 2020-2022 with much more uncertainty and social change, posing a major challenge for the growth of the voluntary sports sector. It is important that Antrim GAA stays attuned to those changes, understands the potential impact to both the sport and the organisation, and ensures that we are well-placed to respond accordingly with more resilient financial strategy.

To rise to this challenge, we need firstly to build a stronger foundation through better management of our own organisation and limited resources as illustrated in the Strategic Framework.

The priority actions have been informed by a Snapshot Strategic Review of our existing operations and extensive consultation with our members and other stakeholders and are set out under *Outcome 2: 'A High Performing and Accountable Organisation'*.

Improving Our Governance

The GAA is a community-based volunteer organisation promoting Gaelic Games, culture, and life-long participation. Antrim GAA welcome everybody to be a part of our County, and we strive to listen to and respect the views of all and to operate with integrity at all times. Most importantly we aim to be accountable in all matters and at all times to our membership.

Governance is the system of rules, practices, and processes by which the Association and all of its Units are directed and controlled. Our rules are defined in the GAA Official Guide. This Guide sets our standards to be achieved under the five main principles of Governance – leading, controlling, being accountable, working effectively and behaving with integrity. These principles resonate with the feedback received during the consultation process:

- **LEADERSHIP:** developing appropriate strategic plans that are properly resourced and regularly monitored, evaluated, and reported back to members;
- **CONTROLS:** ensuring that appropriate internal financial and management controls are in place and managed in a transparent fashion and effectively communicated;
- **ACCOUNTABILITY:** actions should stand up to scrutiny by members or other various stakeholders having an interest in the activities of Antrim GAA;
- **WORKING EFFECTIVELY:** volunteers should operate in an efficient and effective organisation, anything less is effectively poor use of their time; and
- **INTEGRITY:** individual and collective integrity at all levels is fundamental to the promotion and reputation of Antrim GAA.

Maximising Our Commercial Opportunity

The commercial sponsorship, rights sales and partnerships sector has undergone considerable change over the past decade. While we have managed to grow our commercial income. Private sector partners are looking for 'Corporate Social Responsibility' investments or mutually beneficial marketing partnerships rather than traditional rights sales.

In addition, the economic downturn has created a particularly challenging economic climate. To maximise additional income in this area it is vital that Antrim GAA develops its own insight and commercial capabilities. An important aspect of developing long-term commercial partnerships is community engagement and alignment of brand values.

Targeting Public Sector Grants

We are clear that we must be focused on determining our own organisation's strategy and priorities, before seeking to identify compatible and mutually beneficial partnerships with public and third-sector funding organisations. Over the past few years, we have been self-reliant with no dependence on government grant funding.

However as demonstrated within this strategy, there is strong alignment between our strategic outcomes and the current strategies of the Programme for Government, Department for Communities, Sport NI, and local councils. Therefore, a more proactive approach to diversify income streams and secure public sector grants will be pursued.

Grassroots Development and Members Resilience

As a not-for-profit organisation income generated is reinvested in the sport to deliver the Strategic Plan and ultimately benefit our members and stakeholders. As a membership body, the strategy we have established sets out our ambition to increase the resilience of our affiliation and membership income. Primarily, this will be achieved through improved engagement with clubs and ensuring that we continually demonstrate value.

We recognise the importance of ensuring that any additional income generated from membership growth is reinvested and supports the organisation's priorities. Continued investment in membership and other core services will underpin the ability of the Antrim GAA to support a larger membership base and improve the quality of service to members.

Gaelfast is a catalyst for transforming Gaelic Games within Belfast, as Ireland's 2nd largest city, and across County Antrim. Gaelfast has been critical to grassroots development over the past five years funding both games development staff and coaching programme costs. The positive impact of this programme cannot be overstated, and Antrim GAA will use this new Strategic Plan as the basis for a funding submission to GAA central to sustain this work for a further five years.

Controlling Our Expenditure

In addition to income growth and diversification, keeping our operating expenditure under continual review and challenge is equally important to our financial resilience over the period of this plan. Critically, we will ensure that the right balance is achieved in the allocation of resources to our Senior Teams, Games Development and Playing Facilities. We will benchmark our expenditure against other counties and strive to make efficiencies across all areas of expenditure where possible.



Financial Strategy

In a constantly changing climate, we need to challenge our dependencies, with the ultimate ambition of reducing the organisation's reliance on any single funding source. However, we continue to use different financial scenarios to plan for potential changes to match attendances, member behaviour, public sector funding, commercial partnerships, and fundraising activities.

Our financial strategy is based on our current financial baseline (annual management accounts to September 2024) and sets ambitious targets over the next five years to:

- Increase annual income from £1.6m to £2.3m to fund annual expenditure;
- Develop new commercial opportunities to increase commercial income by 50%;
- Sustain core funding of the Gaelfast Programme of c.£1.5m;
- Secure public sector grants equivalent to 10% of total income;
- Maintain Senior Team expenditure at the national average of 46% of total expenditure;
- Generate annual surpluses to rebuild reserves for reinvestment in a grass roots and facilities sinking fund; and
- Accumulate a financial reserve of at least 3 months operating costs to absorb any unforeseen changes in our financial planning assumptions.

Investing in Our Organisation

To enable us to achieve the ambitious targets outlined in this plan we will require resources to employ and develop our staff, strengthen our sporting systems, deliver our services, and run a high-performing organisation.

Throughout this Strategic Plan period, we will develop annual Operational Plans based on our financial projections and work towards achieving our objectives and targets as effectively and efficiently as possible, and within our financial limits. The current staff structure will be reviewed following the adoption of this Strategic Plan.

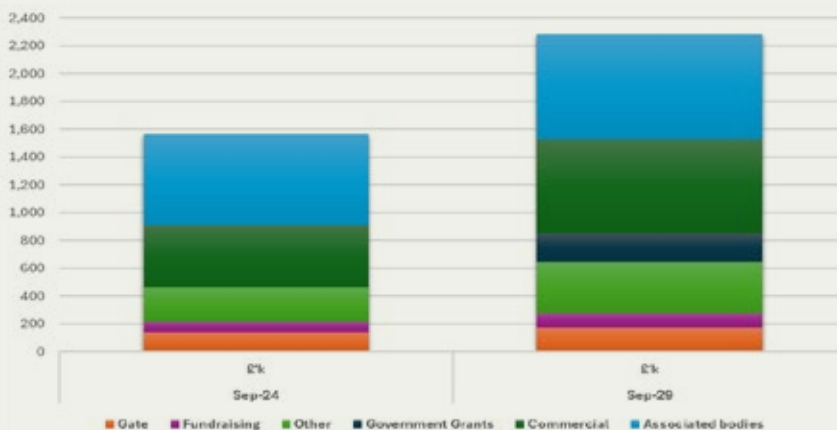
Our headline financial forecasts summarised in the graphs below are supported by detailed annual income and expenditure projections that will underpin our operational plans and be subject to ongoing scrutiny under **Outcome 2: 'A High Performing and Accountable Organisation'**.



i) Target Income

We have used our current baseline financial position and forecasted the annual income required to deliver our Strategic Plan over the next five years to be **£2.3m**, with the breakdown of income shown opposite.

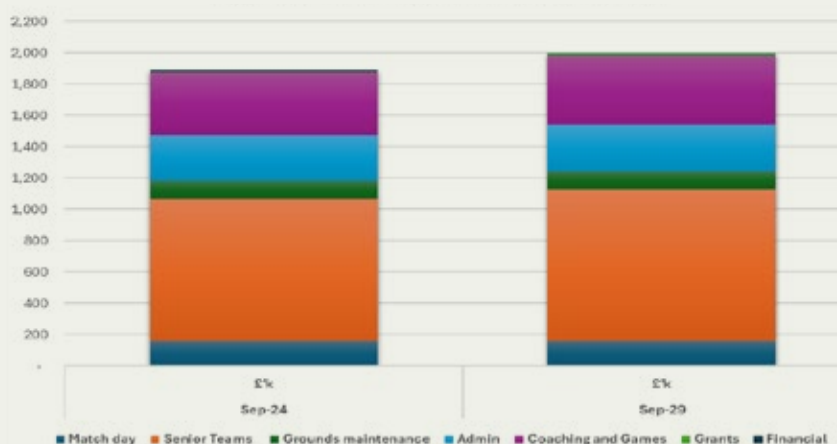
Income: Baseline and Target



ii) Target Expenditure

We have used our current baseline financial position and forecast the annual cost of delivering our Strategic Plan over the next five years to be **£2m**, with the expenditure breakdown shown opposite.

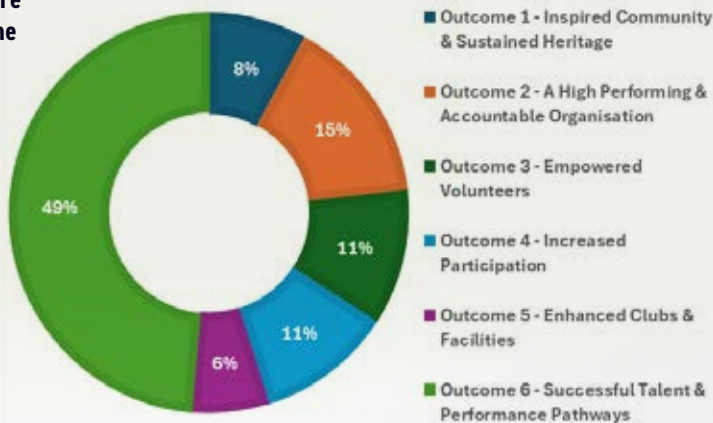
Expenditure: Baseline and Target



iii) Target Resource Allocation by Strategic Outcome

Our costed plan has also been aligned with our six strategic outcomes to highlight the prioritisation of our limited resources to ensure we operate effectively and maximise impact for our stakeholders. The expenditure allocation by Strategic Outcome is shown opposite.

Expenditure by Outcome - Target





8.

ACHIEVING OUR OUTCOMES

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Antrim GAA is resolutely committed to the ambitious goals outlined in this Strategic Plan. This Plan identifies key objectives and specific actions necessary to achieve our vision of creating a sustainable and prosperous future for the organisation and its clubs, with a focus on targeted growth in critical areas.

Effective implementation of this Plan will depend on a comprehensive and ongoing monitoring policy, involving contributions from Antrim GAA, Ulster GAA, and National GAA. A robust information management system will be essential for systematically tracking progress towards our objectives and ensuring the Plan's overall effectiveness.

Successful delivery also hinges on several key factors: maintaining and expanding our staff team, securing adequate resources, and funding, developing a reliable information management system for tracking key indicators, and engaging clubs and members in the Plan's review and assessment.



To realise our commitments and achieve our shared vision, outcomes, and objectives, we will:

Establish a Strategy Implementation Committee

This Committee will oversee and ensure accountability for the achievement of outcomes and objectives outlined in the Strategic Plan. Chaired independently, the Committee will monitor progress, address challenges, and make recommendations to keep the strategy on track. It will meet regularly to review updates and provide guidance on critical actions.

Develop an Implementation and Reporting Framework

For each key outcome, a comprehensive Framework will be developed to guide implementation and monitor progress. This framework will outline baselines to establish starting points, set measurable targets to define success, and assign specific responsibilities to individuals or teams. It will also incorporate timelines, reporting intervals, and accountability measures to ensure that all actions are tracked and aligned with strategic objectives. Regular updates will be provided to assess progress, address challenges, and adapt strategies as needed.

Implement a Management Information System (MIS)

Commit to establishing a robust MIS, with systems and processes for capturing essential data and measuring impact across all strategic activities. This system will ensure accurate, timely data collection and reporting, enabling informed decision-making and effective tracking of progress toward key targets. If a suitable system is not already in place, steps will be taken to identify, select, and implement the appropriate technology and tools.

Prepare Annual Operational Plans and Conduct Reviews

Develop detailed annual Operational Plans that outline specific actions aligned with strategic outcomes. Regular reviews will be conducted to assess progress, identify any areas needing adjustment, and update actions as necessary to stay on track toward achieving key outcomes. This process ensures continuous alignment with the overall Strategic Plan and responsiveness to emerging challenges and opportunities.

Communicate Progress

Regularly share updates with members by integrating progress reports into our Communications and Engagement Strategy and publishing annual impact reports. This approach ensures transparency, keeps clubs and members informed, and highlights achievements, fostering continued engagement and support for strategic outcomes.

Invest in Resources

Allocate the necessary resources—financial, human, and technical—to support the effective implementation and success of the Strategic Plan. This investment ensures that all actions are achievable, and that the organisation is equipped to meet its strategic outcomes.

Enhance Governance and Leadership

Strengthen governance structures, decision-making processes, and leadership capabilities to support staff and representatives in fulfilling the commitments of the Strategic Plan. This includes refining roles, promoting accountability, and fostering an environment that enables effective execution of strategic priorities.

