

Draft Kildare Town LAP
C/O Senior Executive Officer
Planning Department
Kildare County Council
Áras Chill Dara
Devoy Park
Naas
Co. Kildare.

03 May 2023

Submission on Kildare Town Draft Local Area Plan 2023 - 2029

In Relation to Community Sports Facilities

Dear Sir / Madam,

We, **Brock McClure, Planning and Development Consultants, 63 York Road, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin** have been instructed to prepare this submission on behalf of The **Round Towers GAA Club, Kildare Town Athletics Club and Kildare Town AFC**, all of Kildare town. Together they represent the majority of those engaged in recreational sport in the town. The submission relates to the analysis of open space and sporting facilities in the Kildare Town Draft Local Area Plan 2023-2029. It also includes a proposal to address the significant deficits in community sporting facilities in the area.

A Submission on the Kildare Town Draft Local Area Plan 2023 – 2029 is now set out below. This submission is made within the statutory period for submissions, that being **4pm on Wednesday 3rd May 2023**.

1 KILDARE TOWN SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE AUDIT

As part of the Kildare Town Draft Local Area Plan 2023-2029, a study was presented titled, “Kildare Town Social Infrastructure Audit”. We have reviewed this report in some detail and with our clients support respectfully submit that this report does not accurately reflect the up-to-date situation in Kildare Town. It is our client’s submission that the examination of the issues is cursory, its methodology flawed and its results incorrect. There was no engagement with anyone involved in sport prior to its compilation. Indeed, the public consultation for the draft LAP was undertaken over 4.5 years ago, making any findings based on it of little value.

There was no evidence of any assessment of the capacity of existing sports infrastructure in the town. The study recognises that Kildare has a young socially deprived, poorly educated population, more likely to be unemployed than the national average. These findings, however, are not used in determining what social and sports provision should be and this represents a significant gap in the Draft Local Area Plan.

1.1 Analysis of Sport Facilities

In Section 3.5 of the report, we respectfully submit that public open space and sports facilities are confused and in some cases double counted, so that a conclusion is arrived at that there is sufficient

quantum's of both in Kildare town. This is not the case. The inclusion of the National Stud and Gardens, a field belonging to the Carmelite Friary, sports pitches outside the study area and facilities yet to be developed, give an impression that there is sufficient public open space. This is not the case. A figure of 55.4 ha for public open space in the study area is mentioned in the report, but no breakdown or location of this space is provided. At least 25.75 ha of this is sports pitches, not available for public use and should be excluded from any discussion on provision of amenity areas.

In Section 3.6 of the report, reference is made to the use of school facilities by various clubs. It must be noted that such use is limited and does not contribute significantly to providing access to sporting activity for the town's population. One of the playgrounds mentioned is a private commercial entity, primarily for use by those who visit the adjoining retail outlet. The Irish National Stud Park and Gardens is referenced, which provides no sports facilities and is in private ownership. Cill Dara Golf Club is included but is outside the study area. The Kildare Town Community School's grounds are privately owned and cater for their 900 students. Any public access is limited.

In Section 3.6.1 reference is made to FIT analysis, which covers quantitative and qualitative analysis of sports provision. In the case of this study, the quantitative analysis is based on incorrect data and any qualitative analysis is not attempted at all. 25.14 ha of outdoor playing pitches is referenced, without being identified. This includes the lands of the Rugby Club, which are not within the study area.

Furthermore, there is no analysis of indoor sporting facilities. With the exception of those in Kildare Town Community School they are not fit for purpose.

The Audit also includes lands used by the GAA on Old Road under a temporary short term licence agreement, which means that they are restricted from developing the facilities to any sort of good standard.

1.2 Compliance with the Development Plan Standards

If these areas included in error were excluded, Kildare town's outdoor sports area provision would not comply with Development Plan standards. Moreover, this study presented as part of the Draft Local Area Plan seems to suggest using the lands at Cherry Avenue to address this issue, while at the same time also using the same lands to address the public open space deficit. We respectfully suggest that these are not appropriate duplications.

In Section 4.4 of the study, it states that the quantity of public open space complies with Development Plan standards. If the errors and double counting outlined above are reversed, this no longer complies.

1.3 Current Conditions of Clients' Facilities

In Section 4.5 it states that there is more than adequate provision of sporting facilities in Kildare. It is our respectful submission that this not the case.

The Round Towers have a long-term base in St Brigid's Park, comprising of one pitch. The club has 1,634 members, fields 52 teams, from under 7 to senior football, ladies football, camogie and hurling.

Kildare Athletics Club has the use of St Brigid's Park for three hours a week. It has no athletics facilities apart from a shot-put area in a car park and a long jump area. Their members are mostly juvenile, because of the poor facilities and their inability to improve them due to their limited tenure in St Brigid's Park.

Kildare Town AFC has 20 teams using 2 full size pitches and 2 6-a-side pitches, in poor condition, with sub-standard changing facilities. They have c.500 members and field men's and ladies from underage to adult teams. They continue to lose members to clubs in Naas and Newbridge, where better facilities have been provided.



1.4 Conclusions

It is these types of issues that would have been raised had meaningful analysis with stakeholders has been undertaken in the last 12 months.

Sports areas outside the study area are used to make the provision erroneously meet the standard. In this context, it is our submission that the figure of 25.14 ha is not a realistic measure of areas available for non-school sporting activity.

2 VISION FOR COMMUNITY SPORTS CAMPUS

Our clients support the zoning of a c.13.36 ha to facilitate the provision of Community Sports Campus on Old Road – see enclosed drawing prepared by MCORM Architects.

The landowners, Pouterle Ltd, are happy to honour previous commitments in this regard and provide these lands for such uses.

There is no better option in the town to develop a state-of-the-art sports facility. The merits of this site are as follows:

- 1.5km or 18 minutes walking distance from the train station.
- A contiguous parcel of land.
- Close to Kildare Town Community School and the designated site for the new primary school on South Green Road.
- Easy extension of active transportation routes for access.
- Good free draining soil, with a reasonably flat topography.
- An opportunity to provide an integrated sports campus, benefiting from the synergies such an integrated community development would bring.

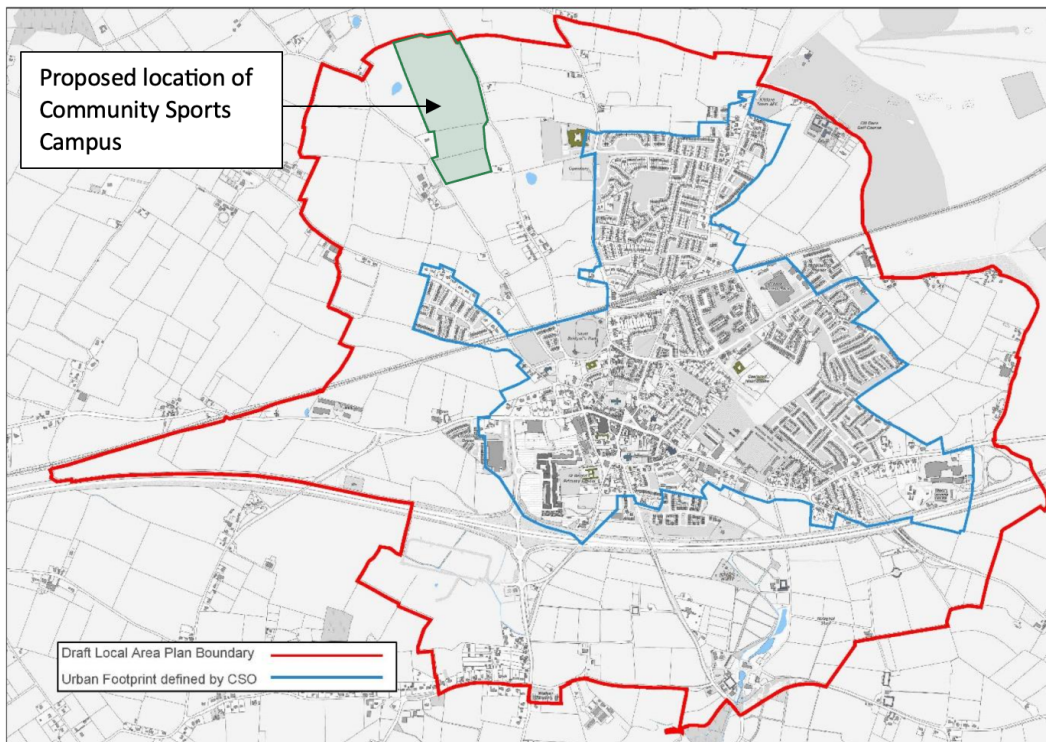


Figure 1 – Location Map

A suggested layout is attached with this submission.

We would ask that the Council consider this submission and explicitly support this proposal by zoning the subject site for this use.

3 REZONING REQUEST

We hereby request the council rezone the subject site from I: Agricultural to F: Open Space and Amenity

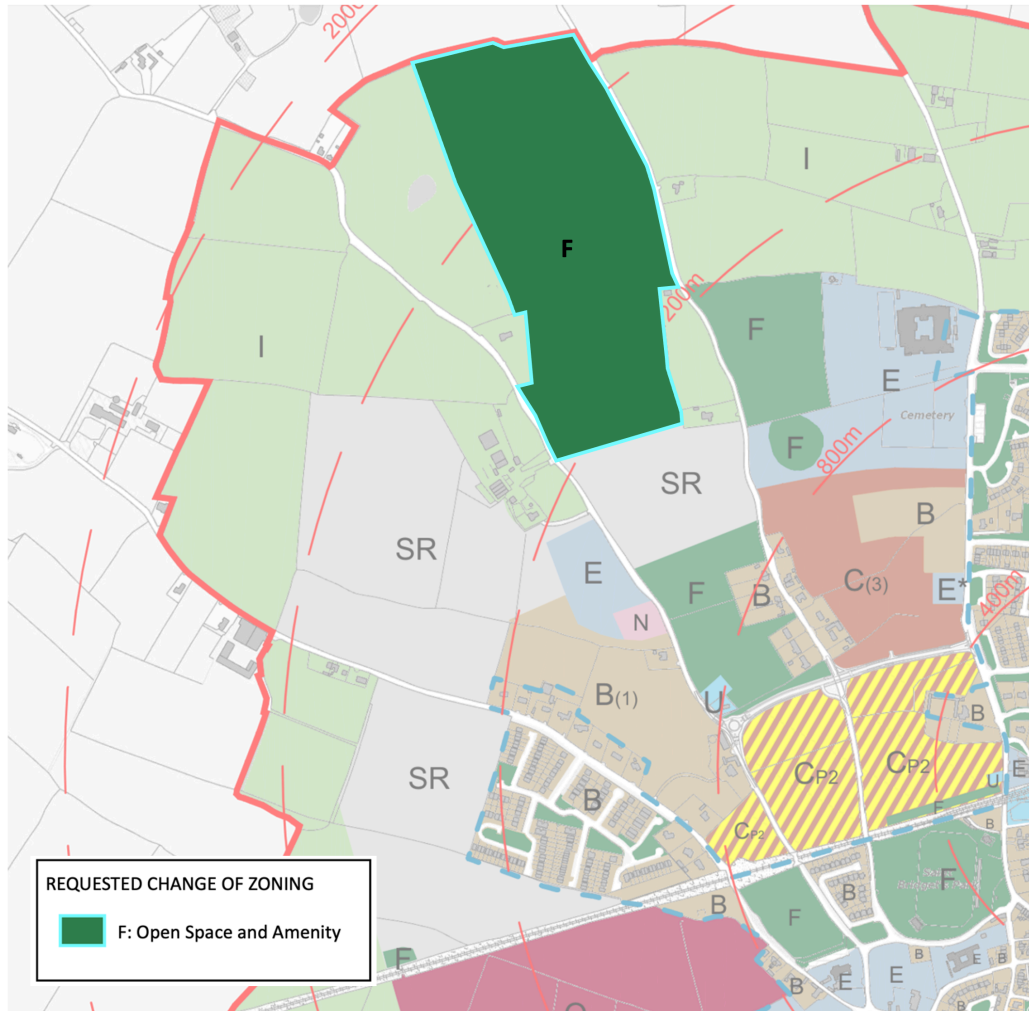


Figure 2 – Rezoning Request

4 CONCLUSION

We confirm that we act on behalf of The Round Towers GAA Club, Kildare Town Athletics Club and Kildare Town AFC, all of Kildare town and request that all future correspondence on this matter be directed to this office.

Yours sincerely,

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