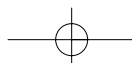
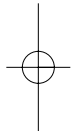
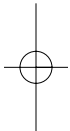
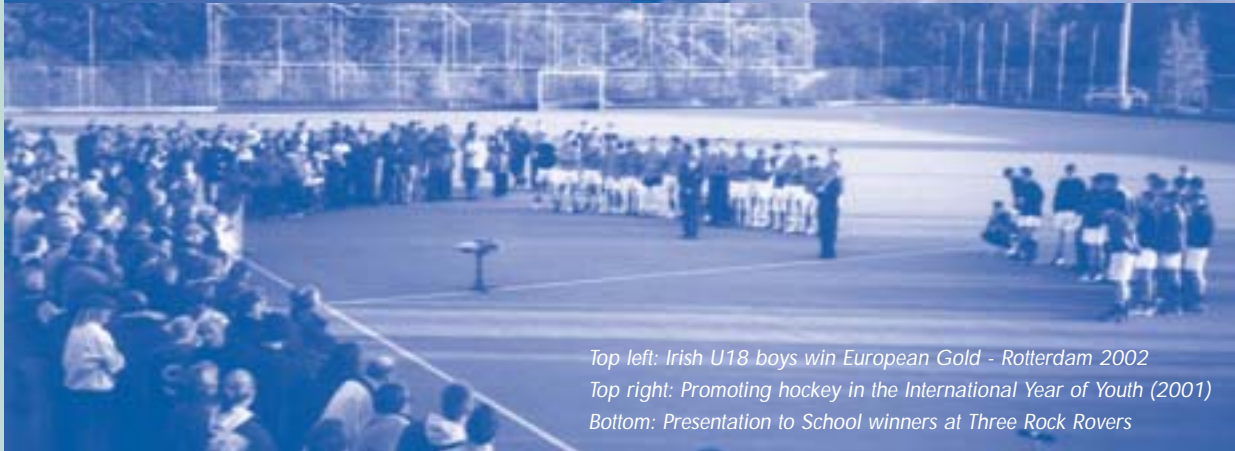


IRISH HOCKEY ASSOCIATION STRATEGIC PLAN CONTENTS

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*Top left: Irish U18 boys win European Gold - Rotterdam 2002
Top right: Promoting hockey in the International Year of Youth (2001)
Bottom: Presentation to School winners at Three Rock Rovers*



CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD

Strategic direction is important in all walks of life. As hockey in Ireland continues to develop following the amalgamation of the mens and ladies unions there is a recognised need for a strategic direction. The Steering Group was impressed by the enthusiasm of officials, players and many others involved directly or indirectly in the development of the game, to contribute to the planning process.

In presenting this document to you I would stress that this is not the end of the process . . . quite the opposite. The Steering Group has presented the framework through which the process can start but much hard work needs to be done by everyone concerned to ensure that implementation takes place. This can clearly be seen in the action plans which need to work within the timescales indicated if all aspects of the plan are to be delivered.

I hope everyone who contributed to the many consultation sessions can see that the document reflects most of the views of those who attended. It is up to everyone interested in the development of hockey in Ireland to further contribute to taking the process forward.

In particular the steering group would wish to acknowledge the support given by the Irish Sports Council not just in financial terms but at all times during the consultation process. Support in the future will be even more important as the implementation process gets underway.

As Chairperson I am conscious of the huge commitment in time given by members of the Planning Team to the development of the Plan. All have agreed to continue to contribute over the next year to see the implementation process started. Thanks are also due to everyone who attended the workshops and to Genesis Consulting for steering and focussing our thoughts. Our challenge is to ensure that time spent has not been wasted but is built upon to ensure the future direction of hockey in Ireland.

Ronnie Smyth

Introduction

The Strategic Plan for Irish Hockey was developed against a background of major change in the administration of hockey in Ireland and the increasing influence and developing partnerships with the Irish Sports Council, the Sports Council Northern Ireland, the National Coaching & Training Centre and the Olympic Council of Ireland.

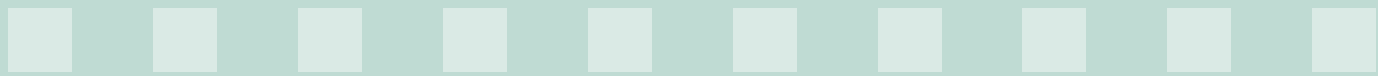
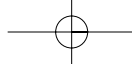
In May 2000 the Irish Hockey Association was founded with the amalgamation of the former Irish Ladies Hockey Union and the former Irish Hockey Union. Both Unions had a strong culture of voluntary support throughout Ireland and were recognised nationally and internationally as well-organised sporting bodies. The Ladies Union, had five affiliated branches, Connacht, Leinster, Munster, South-East and Ulster and had celebrated one hundred years of women's hockey by hosting the highly successful 8th Women's World Cup at the newly developed National Hockey Stadium at Belfield, Dublin in 1994. The Men's Union had three provincial affiliates, Leinster, Munster and Ulster, and had organised the Men's European Nations Cup in Dublin in 1995.



Structure

The constitution and structure of the Irish Hockey Association was agreed at a general meeting in May 2000 with all eight branches confirming affiliation to the new body.

The Council determines policy and is made up of the officers of the Association, sixteen branch representatives, chairpersons of the five core committees (Coaching, Competitions, International, Youth & Schools, Marketing & Publicity) and chairpersons of the two associations (Umpires and Universities). A Management Committee has the responsibility for the day to day management of the Association.



The Association has 193 clubs and 280 schools in membership with approximately 40,500 playing members. There are approximately one thousand accredited coaches and twenty tutors, trained in partnership with the National Coaching and Training Centre. There are three hundred and twenty one qualified umpires and technical personnel.

Currently, there are three administrative staff, one fulltime and two part-time staff, employed by the Association.

The four main objectives of the Association are:

- To encourage, promote, develop, manage and control all hockey in Ireland;
- To compete in international hockey at the highest level;
- To administer the funds of the Association;
- To make, maintain and publish rules and regulations for the proper running of the Association.

Interprovincial tournaments are held for Senior, Junior, Under 21, Under 18 and Under 16 players and at club level All-Ireland league and cup competitions are organised for Senior, Junior and Schools teams.

Internationally, the Under age teams compete successfully in European competitions and in July 2002 the Under 18 boys won the gold medal in the European Youth Trophy, Division A with the Under 16 Boys and Under 18 Girls retaining Division A status. The Under 21 men qualified for the World Junior Cup in Hobart Australia in October 2001.

At Senior level the Women's Team qualified and competed in the 10th Women's World Cup in November 2002 in Perth, Australia. In July 2002 both the Men's and Women's Teams won the European Qualifying Tournaments, hosted in Dublin, and so qualified for the European Nations Cups to be held in Barcelona, Spain in September 2003.

In European Club competitions Irish clubs and schools continue to qualify in Division A, with the women's teams, in particular, ranked in the top six in Europe.

The Planning Process

With the formation of the Association it was appropriate to put in place a Strategic Plan for hockey, one which plots the direction for the sport for the next four years. The planning process was undertaken during 2002.

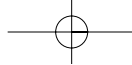
To ensure that the sport goes in the direction most of its members want it to go it was agreed that consultation was absolutely essential and with the support and guidance of Edinburgh based Genesis Consulting, a wide cross-section of views have been solicited. Consultations were held in Leinster and Ulster, followed by sessions in Connacht, Munster and South-East. International players have had the opportunity to give their input and many from outside of the sport have willingly given of their expertise to move the process forward.

During the consultation process the following emerged as the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the Association, although weaknesses in some geographical areas are strengths in others. For example, whilst there are no full time development officers in three of the provinces, there are two development officers, one full-time and one part-time, in Ulster.

Strengths

- Commitment and high quality of volunteers throughout the game
- Commitment to improving standards in all aspects of the game
- An opportunity for change has been created by the merger of men's and women's unions and the formation of the IHA.
- Proven track record
- Well organised leagues and cups competitions
- Positive image as a social, family sport
- A sport that is played throughout Ireland

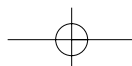
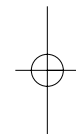
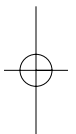





- A sport for all age groups
- Improving development of coaching and coaching structures
- Excellent youth structures in more developed areas
- Increasing number of synthetic pitches
- Hockey as an Olympic sport
- Good sport for schools that encourages the development of life skills
- High levels of performance across the age ranges

Weaknesses

- Poor communication between Association, branches and clubs
- Poor media coverage, sponsorship and public relations
- Lack of financial resources
- Lack of recruitment initiatives to encourage younger members into the decision making structures of the sport
- Quantity and quality of umpires (Not enough umpires and not enough high quality umpires)
- Lack of good off-pitch facilities
- Lack of development officers in some areas and limited resources for coaching
- Lack of player development structure
- Inconsistent financial support for elite teams and squads
- Too much focus on competitions
- Poor links between schools and clubs
- Weakness in the Association's infrastructure
- Too elite focused



- 
- Inconsistent and incomplete geographical spread of the game
 - Not enough water based pitches

Prior to producing Draft One of the Plan a one-day Consultation Forum was held with representative groups including delegates from the Council, the branches, the Management Committee and other key sectors of the sport. The purpose of the Forum was to:


- Review the consultation inputs;
- Assist the Planning Team by reviewing their work so far;
- Consider the process for working up the detailed action plan;
- Consider future approaches to consultation and implementation.

Draft One of the Plan was completed, presented to the Management Committee and forwarded for further comment to the branches and to over 300 players, coaches, umpires, administrators and friends in an attempt to ensure that their views were reflected in the final report. The Steering Group is grateful to all those who contributed.

When doing local consultations the group was conscious that some of the suggestions were linked more closely to local developments and may not be reflected in this document. However, this Strategic Plan for Irish Hockey should provide the framework from which such suggestions can be developed at individual branch levels.

Finance

The cost of implementing the new structure and the new posts outlined in the plan will be in excess of 400,000 Euro over the three year period. For a sport that is struggling to finance the costs of its international programme this might seem unwise at the present time. However, failure to identify the need for and to resource such posts in the past has left the sport with an over-worked band of volunteers providing the direction and day-to-day organisation. These volunteers will be needed in the future but with an increase in the number of professional staff the Planning Team believes that the sport will be in a much healthier position. This view was much in evidence during the consultation process.



Partnerships could be the solution to many of the funding scenarios. The appointment of a High Performance Director might seem an expensive luxury, yet in December 2002 the Ulster Branches recruited such a person as part of the Sports Institute Northern Ireland. There may be the potential to expand such a remit into the All Ireland scene with an additional financial input. In a similar vein, local authorities in the Republic are currently investing in Sports Development models leaving the door open for branches to investigate development officer posts through partnership. The Leinster Men's Branch has contracted an international coach consultant to develop its youth structures and this would appear to be an opportunity for further development through some form of partnership. Appointing a Chief Executive Officer will ensure that these models can be fully developed and investigated.

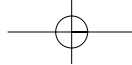
Conclusion

In December the Irish women's squad participated with fifteen other nations in the World Cup in Perth, Australia and will participate in the Olympic Qualifying Tournament in New Zealand in March 2004. Few other women's team sports in Ireland can compete successfully at this level and with the current men's side showing great promise for the future, the dream of an Irish Hockey side taking part in an Olympic Games is one that could be realised and should be invested in.

"Success is a journey not a destination."

This strategy aims to put in place the structure for developing hockey for the next three years and beyond. It aims to build on the successful work done at branch level, to take on board the models of good practice in respect of talent development in some parts of Ireland and expand these into other areas.

The process itself has been enlightening. It has made many of those involved realise the healthy state of hockey through the structures in place at youth level, but has highlighted the need to continue investing in these and in providing opportunities for those involved in our sport at International level.



IRISH HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

Vision

To have hockey recognised as a leading, inclusive, family orientated, participant based sport throughout Ireland and through which Ireland enjoys international respect and success.

Values

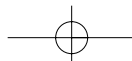
The Irish Hockey Association will be guided in its operation by the following principles:

- Participant centred focus
- Effectiveness
- Trust
- Respect
- Accountability
- Fair Play
- Openness and transparency



Strategic Goals

1. To promote and market hockey as a significant sport within Ireland.
2. To realise the full potential for growing the sport throughout Ireland.
3. To raise the standard of performance at all levels in the sport.
4. To review and develop competitive structures at all levels.
5. To have National Squads competing at European, World Cup and Olympic levels.
6. To make the Association a well managed and effective sporting organisation.



Strategic Goals

1. To promote and market hockey as a significant sport within Ireland

No other sport has changed its rules and playing surfaces more than field hockey. In countries like Holland and Australia huge crowds are attracted to games, yet in Ireland the image of hockey amongst many, including those in the media, goes back to the days of grass pitches and the bully off. Irish Hockey has a significant task to do to convince those not involved in hockey about the excitement and skill of the modern game. New and creative marketing skills must be employed to raise the profile of hockey to make it a more significant sport in Ireland.

- 1.1 Appoint a Promotion and Marketing Committee
- 1.2 Produce a Media and Communications Plan.
- 1.3 Appoint a Public Relations Officer.
- 1.4 Produce a new 'branding' for hockey.
- 1.5 Produce sponsorship packages and target appropriate sponsors for different aspects of the game.
- 1.6 Raise the profile and awareness of the modern game of hockey.



Strategic Goals

2. To realise the full potential for growing the sport throughout Ireland

At present the largest number of hockey players is under the age of eighteen. From this group only a small percentage joins a club after leaving school. To grow the sport the aim will be firstly to retain these players within the sport and secondly to increase the number of people involved in the sport by promoting hockey through the traditional channels as well as by targeting new groups. Geographic growth in areas with low participation is to be achieved by specific recruitment and development initiatives linked to local sports partnerships.

The Association has a strong volunteer base. To maintain and strengthen the capacity of the volunteers in a changing sports environment, training and development opportunities will be provided.

- 2.1 Appoint development officers.
- 2.2 Identify and prioritise regions with growth potential and develop plans to meet local needs.
- 2.3 Design and implement a National Development Plan for Hockey.
- 2.4 Raise awareness of good club governance.
- 2.5 Implement the principles of the Code of Ethics and Good Practice in Childrens Sport.
- 2.6 Develop support services and promotion material for schools and clubs.
- 2.7 Develop model for school-club links for implementation at local level.
- 2.8 Promote hockey in teacher training colleges and universities.
- 2.9 Develop partnerships with organisations where hockey is played outside current Association structures.

Strategic Goals

3. To raise standards of performance at all levels in the sport

Irish teams have always performed well on the International stage particularly at youth level. However hockey must be aware of the lure of other sports to young people and look at how these sports are attracting and retaining young people. Schools may not always be the source of talent and strategies must be developed to raise performance at all levels in the sport, for coaches, umpires and players. A strategic approach will ensure coordinated development at all levels

- 3.1 Appoint a project team which will develop a policy for talent development and identify programmes to raise performance.
- 3.2 Establish player, coach and umpire pathways.
- 3.3 Establish an annual hockey conference.
- 3.4 Design a National performance development programme.
- 3.5 Establish National age group regional development centres.
- 3.6 Promote need for water based pitches throughout Ireland.
- 3.7 Introduce development programmes for volunteers and course development plans based on strategic plans.

4. To review and develop competitive structures at every level

Appropriate and progressive competitive structures are essential to protect and challenge players at all levels. The Planning Team strongly recommends that consideration must be given to the problem of the over playing of young and international players. The establishment of a competitive structure which bridges the gulf between provincial, club and international hockey and recognises the demands on elite players is now needed.



Strategic Goals

- 4.1 Develop appropriate competitive structures for youth hockey.
- 4.2 Expand the Club Championship and investigate the development of an All Ireland League.
- 4.3 Revise competitive structures for club hockey to facilitate the transition to the international game.
- 4.4 Increase the profile of interprovincial tournaments.
- 4.5 Develop policy for playing all major tournaments at all levels on water-based pitches.

5. To have national squads competing at European, World Cup and Olympic levels

A sport is often judged by the performance of its national teams. Creating a high performance culture needs direction and a coordinated approach. More people playing will not guarantee international success. This will only be done when athletes are given an integrated programme which fully prepares them to perform on the international stage at every level. An outline of such a programme is attached in Appendix 4.

"If we fail to plan – we plan to fail."

- 5.1 Appoint a high performance coaching group which builds on the policy of the raising standards project team (see goal no. 3).
- 5.2 Develop and implement a four year High Performance Plan for Hockey.
- 5.3 Appoint a professional High Performance Director.
- 5.4 Source funding for the High Performance Plan.
- 5.5 Identify High Performance service providers and develop appropriate opportunities for international sides.
- 5.6 Monitor, review and evaluate progress.

Strategic Goals

6. To make the I.H.A. a well managed and effective sporting organisation

During the consultation process the appointment of a Chief Executive Officer was prioritised to enable Irish Hockey to become a more professional organisation and to seize the opportunity to move the sport forward. The Chief Executive would lead and manage the organisation, ensure the implementation of the Strategic Plan and support the Officers of the Association.

The Strategic Plan implies the development of new structures that will reflect an inclusive, open, transparent organisation built on youth and experience; an organisation where selection is made on the basis of ability.

Part of this restructuring would be the integration of the sport at branch level and this should be addressed in a provincial context. The successful integration of the women's and men's game nationally would suggest that the time is right for this rationalisation. Whilst the Association would facilitate the integration to a four province organisation the modus operandi of such integration would be at the discretion of the branches.

- 6.1 Appoint a Chief Executive to implement the Strategic Plan and develop the new organisation.
- 6.2 Adopt an appropriate company structure.
- 6.3 Establish Articles of Association and Memorandum of Understanding which reflects the ethos of the new organisation.
- 6.4 Establish committees which reflect the new Management structure.
- 6.5 Facilitate the integration of mens and womens branches at Provincial level.
- 6.6 Undertake an audit of all aspects of the Association.

Financial Implications

Strategic Plan Budget 2003 to 2005

	Date	2003 €	2004 €	2005 €
Strategic Goal No 1				
"To promote and market hockey as a significant sport within Ireland"				
1.1	Produce a media communication strategy Printing Costs Launch	November, 2003	1,500 500	- -
1.2	Appoint a Public Relations Officer Recruitment Agency Costs Salary	February, 2004	- -	4,538 26,250
1.5	Produce Sponsorship Packages Printing Costs	September, 2004	500	- 525
Strategic Goal No 2				
"To realise the full potential for growing the sport throughout Ireland"				
2.1	Appoint a development officer Remuneration Package (Salary, Travel and Subsistence Employers PRSI)	May, 2004	2,307	35,687 37,072
2.3	Design and implement National Development Plan for Hockey Printing Costs Meeting Costs	October, 2004	- -	2,500 1,000
2.6	Develop promotional material for clubs and schools. Printing and Postage costs	From May 2004	1,500	- -

	Date	2003 €	2004 €	2005 €
Strategic Goal No 3				
"To raise the standard of performance at all levels in the sport"				
3.3	Annual conference to include all aspects of the game. Hire of room / playing facilities / promotional materials	December, 2004	- 2,000	2,100
3.5	Establishment of National Age Group regional academies	December, 2004	-	6,000
	Regional squads throughout Ireland	December, 2003	15,000	24,000
	Regional development officers (3) Remuneration package	-	-	38,500
3.7	Volunteer development programme - World Hockey Conference	700	1,000	1,000
Strategic Goal No 4				
"To review and develop competitive structures at every level"				
4.3	Raise profile of all interprovincial tournaments	Ongoing		
	Promotional materials / advertising	1,000	1,050	1,103
Strategic Goal No 5				
"To have Irish National Squads competing at European, World Cup, and Olympic level"				
5.2	Appoint a professional High Performance Director	July, 2004	- 7,260	-
	Remuneration Package	-	44,300	46,515
Strategic Goal No 6				
"To make the IHA a well managed and effective sporting organisation"				
6.1	Appoint a CEO			
	Recruitment Agency Costs	October, 2003		
	Remuneration Package		26,928	53,852
6.2	Company Structure			
	Company Formation / Legal Costs	May, 2004	1,710	-
			Total Cost: € 495,667	

Financial Implications

Strategic Goal No. 1

1. "To promote and market hockey as a significant sport within Ireland"

ACTIONS	BY WHOM	TIME SCALE (When by)
1.1 Appoint a Promotion and Marketing Committee	I.H.A.	January 2004
1.2 Produce a media Communication Strategy	Promotion and Marketing Project Team	November 2003
1.3 Appoint a Public Relations Officer	I.H.A., once various options have been explored by Project Team including full time, part time or company based approach	February 2004
1.4 Produce a "branding" for hockey	Promotion and Marketing Committee	March 2004
1.5 Produce sponsorship packages. Target appropriate sponsors for different aspects of the game	Promotion and Marketing Committee in conjunction with Competitions Committee	Packages ready for 2004-05 season
1.6 Raise the profile and awareness of the modern game of hockey	Promotion and Marketing Committee	On-going

Strategic Goal No. 2

2. "To realise the full potential for growing the sport throughout Ireland"

ACTIONS	BY WHOM	TIME SCALE (When by)
2.1 Appoint a Development Officer	I.H.A.	January-May 2004
2.2 Identify and prioritise regions with growth potential and develop plan to suit local needs	Development project group and Development Officer	October 2003 - March 2004
2.3 Design and implement National Development Plan	Player Development Committee with other key personnel including Development Officer	October 2004
2.4/2.5 Raise awareness of good club governance and implement the principles of the Code of Ethics and Good practice for Children's Sport at national, regional and club level	Development Officer and Branch Children's officers	September 2003 and then ongoing
2.6 Develop support services and promotion material for clubs and schools	Development Officer and Marketing Committee	May 2004, ongoing
2.7 Develop model for school-club links for implementation at local level	Development Officer, Branches, and Schools	September 2004
2.8 Promote hockey in all teacher training colleges and universities	Development Officer/ Marketing Committee	September 2004, ongoing
2.9 Partnerships with organisations where hockey is played outside current structures	Marketing Committee and Development Officer	Ongoing from October 2003

Strategic Goal No. 3

3. "To raise the standard of performance at all levels in the sport"

ACTIONS	BY WHOM	TIME SCALE (When by)
3.1 Appoint a project team to develop a framework on talent development and identify programmes to raise performance standards.	Coaching Committee	July 2003
3.2 Establishment of Player Coach Umpire pathways	Project Team	December 2003
3.3 Organisation of annual conference to include all aspects of the game	Project Team	October 2004
3.4 Design a national performance development programme	Development Officers	June 2004
3.5 Establishment of network of national age group regional development centres	Chief Executive Officer	December 2004
3.6 Promote the need for international standard water based pitches throughout Ireland	IHA	June 2003, ongoing
3.7 Introduce volunteer development programme	Project Team	March 2004

Strategic Goal No. 4

4. "To review and develop competitive structures at every level"

ACTIONS	BY WHOM	TIME SCALE (When by)
4.1 Develop appropriate competitive structures for youth hockey to reflect demands on elite players	Competitions Committee with representation from Schools and Clubs and International Coaches	Ready to implement during season 2005 - 2006
4.2 Expand the Club Championship and investigate the development of an All Ireland league	Competitions Committee	Implemented during season 2004 - 2005
4.3 Revise competitive structures for club hockey to facilitate the transition to the international game	Competitions Committee with branch and representations from Senior International Coaches	Report by January 2004
4.4 Increase profile of interprovincial tournaments at all levels.	Marketing Committee / PRO	May 2004 and ongoing
4.5 Develop policy for playing all major tournaments at all levels on water based pitches	Competitions Committee	January 2004

Strategic Goal No. 5

5. "To have Irish National Squads competing at European, World Cup and Olympic level"

ACTIONS	BY WHOM	TIME SCALE (When by)
5.1 Appoint a High Performance Group which builds on policy of the raising standards project team. (see strategic goal no. 3)	IHA	January 2004
5.2 Develop a four year High Performance Plan	High Performance Group	May 2004
5.3 Appoint a professional High Performance Director	IHA once various options have been explored	July 2004
5.4 Source funding for the High Performance Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketing Group Representatives of High Performance Group 	May 2004 - onward
5.5 Identify High Performance service providers and develop appropriate opportunities for International squads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High Performance Group NCTC Sports Institute Northern Ireland Sports Council 	June 2003 and continually reviewed
5.6 Monitor, review and evaluate progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CEO Management Board 	6 Monthly and after all major tournaments

Strategic Goal No. 6

6. "To make the IHA a well managed and effective sporting organisation"

ACTIONS	BY WHOM	TIME SCALE (When by)
6.1 Appoint a Chief Executive to implement the Strategic Plan	IHA	October 2003
6.2 Adopt an appropriate company structure	Council to nominate a group to make recommendations	June 2003
6.3 Establish Articles of Association and Memorandum of Understanding which reflect the ethos of the new organisation	Group to develop these with their recommendations	May 2004
6.4 Establish Committees which reflect the new Management structure	IHA	May 2004
6.5 Facilitate integration of Men's and Women's Branches at provincial level	Council to appoint 2 members to liaise with Branches	July 2003 - May 2005
6.6 Undertake an audit of all aspects of the Association	Management Committee or independent persons	May 2003

Appendix 7.1

Player Pathway

Hockey is working closely with staff at the National Coaching and Training Centre to develop a player pathway model based on best practice in training and coaching from around the world. This is aimed at producing players who will through their hockey life:

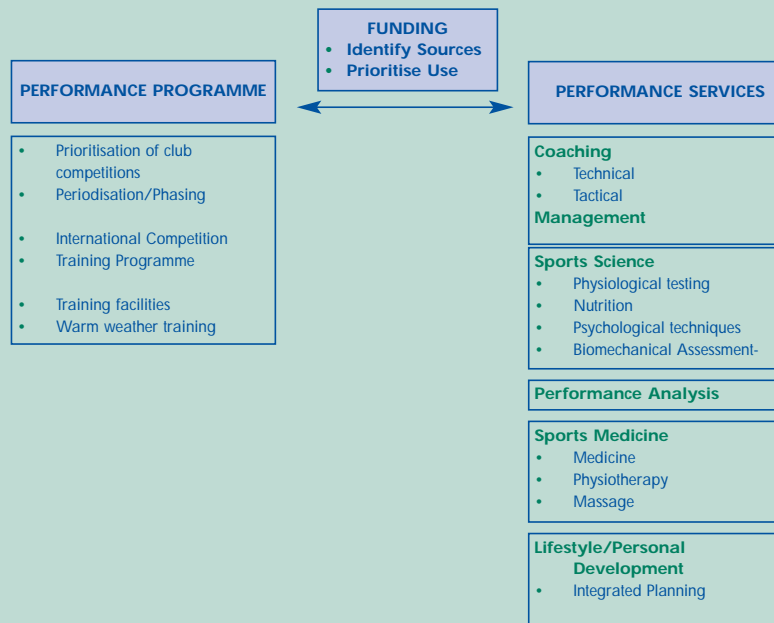
- Have mastered a wide range of technical skills
- Have maximum ball and stick control
- Have a strong tactical awareness
- Have task oriented focus
- Have discipline in the execution of the tasks and awareness of the importance for the team of a good execution of the task
- Have all round athletic development
- Have a physical fitness based on a healthy lifestyle
- Have a strong mental fitness, commitment and resilience
- Have a strong intrinsic motivation (not distracted or upset by external factors) and is emotionally stable (self control)
- Be a self motivated learner with a training discipline and an appetite for continuous improvement
- Be critical about their own performance and take positive steps to improve
- Be able to observe and analyse opponents
- Have respect for opponents (be a good sportsperson)
- Have a good attitude to winning and losing
- Be able to put sporting achievements into perspective
- Have a healthy balance between training and sport performance and study and career outside sport
- Have the social and personal skills to develop good relationships with team mates, opponents, coaching team, officials and people in general, **in other words a fully rounded personality**

Putting together a player pathway for Irish hockey will be one of the challenges for coaches to work together on during the next twelve months.

Appendix 7.2

An Integrated Performance Programme

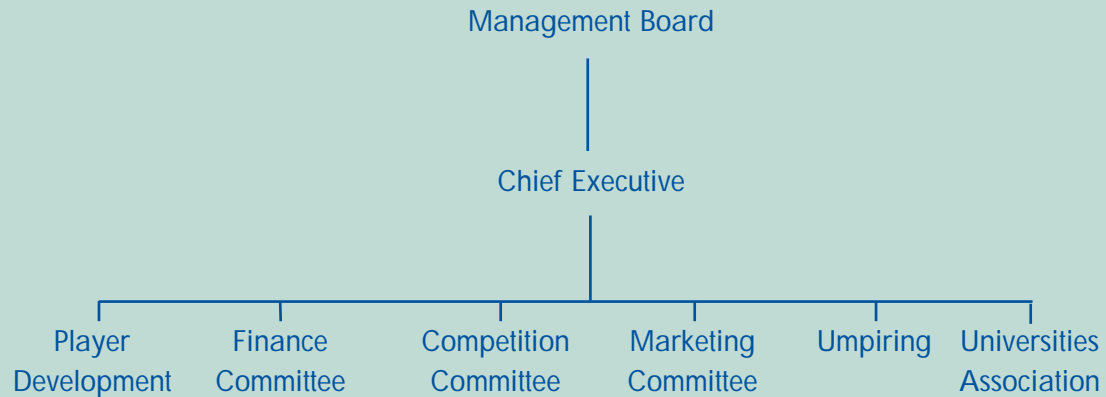
A diagram to show how the IHA proposes to use funding in order to put into place a performance programme that incorporates a variety of performance services.



Appendix 7.3

A modern sports organisation needs to be effective and efficient. It should operate through committees as well as specific project teams. It should be function based rather than representation based. The structure for the organisation of Hockey should reflect those criteria.

Proposed Management Structure



Appendix 7.4

International Player Feedback

Two of the key issues which were raised at the initial stages of the strategic planning process were the Senior Interprovincial tournament and the proposal of an All Ireland league.

The views of the Senior Irish squad were sought on both these issues (March 2002) Of the twenty five players involved their views are summarized below:

1. INTERPROVINCIAL TOURNAMENT

The players were asked their preference for the new format of Interpros where each province played each other before the Interpro weekend.

	Response
Support for new format where each province plays each other once before and then into a round robin Interpro weekend. (Current system)	Unanimous
Time of the Year – as at present ?	Unanimous
In favour of combining the mens and ladies Interpro weekend ?	Unanimous
In favour of combining the mens and ladies Irish Senior Cup final ?	Unanimous
Play both Irish Cup Semi Finals on same day and venue ?	52% Against 48% For

There was strong support for co-coordinating more mens and ladies matches together at various levels including International. There were comments made that they felt that whilst they would be in favour of Irish Cup Finals together there may be sufficient support to keep them as standalone fixtures.

The general feeling among players was that the Interprovincial tournament was about winning it and they felt that the majority of individual development occurred at an Irish level.

2. ALL IRELAND LEAGUE

For or against general principle of All Ireland league in some format?	76% For 24% Against
One tier format (top 8 clubs in Ireland)	21%
Two tier format (top 16 clubs in Ireland)	79%

There were mixed views in relation to an All Ireland league, reasons cited being amount of travel entailed would not outweigh the benefits. However, there was overwhelming support for the inception of the end of season club championships. A possible extension of this tournament at the end of the season could provide an all Ireland league concept without incurring a huge financial cost and commitment in player time.

The players did have strong feelings that their clubs should play matches when they were away on International duty. The concept of phasing was debated with very strong support that non-priority provincial cup competitions are scheduled when Irish players are away thus enabling club fixtures to continue without too much disruption. All players cited over playing as a major area of concern and something that they felt the authorities must address. The concept of phasing would address this in part by removing International players from playing in non-priority provincial cups.

The players were in general delighted to be given an opportunity to provide feedback on such issues and felt that such a forum would be beneficial on an annual basis.

Appendix 7.5

Contributors to the Strategic Plan came from all over Ireland

Jimmy Dunne
Trevor Watkins
Barbara Treacy
Mary Kelly
Doreen Howe
Eithne Coyle
David Judge
Tom O'Donoghue
Ronan Kieran
Paul O'Brien
Josephine Mitchell
Helen Buckley
Sinead French Bluhm
Annette Fortune
John Findlater
Rosie Breen
Eddie Chandler
Peter Murphy
Stewart Atkinson
Paula Shearan
Sally Ann Flanagan
Peter Darley
Rudolf Wortmann
Renate Kohlmann
Deirdre Leonard
Donal Lynam

Ben Glascott
Seamus Butler
Peter Agnew
Brian Chadwick
Tom Parsons
Denise McCarthy
Ian Steepe
John Dooley
Jimmy O'Connor
Brendan Carr
Ralph Tyrrel
Hilary Thompson
Mary Dundon
Crawford Tipping
Rita Parsons
Grace Redmond
Joan Morgan
Pauline Corrigan
Ann Murray
Lyn Lake
Eric Cunningham
Michael Graham
Walter Dowdall
David Lake
Laurence Downey
George Compston

David McManus
Richard Kendrick
Brian Hanna
Nigel McCullough
John V. Smyth
Lesley Spence
Jennifer Wilson
Tim Weir
Jenny Redpath
Peter McCabe
Hilary Milligen
Ann Jameson
Jill Poots
Judith McVicker
Terry Gregg
Diane Crockard
Jennifer Patterson
Lesley Singleton
Pat Hall
Rosemary Rea
David Lewers
Arlene McVicker
Peter Jackson
Alan McMurray
Robert Nelson
Catherine Bird

Jennifer King
Sheila James
Philip Shine
Mary Walsh
John Jermyn
Val Shannon
Mark Lynch
Denis Pritchard
Yvonne Mangan
Alan Dobson
John Rose
Paul Ahern
Noelle Hennesy
Laura Houlihan
Mike Haberlin
Louise Connolly
Pat Dawson
David Shine
John Dennis
Anne Kirwan
Dixon Rose
Ivan Yates
Michelle Browne
Sheila James
Jackie Byrne
Victor Smyth

Simon Pender
Martin White
Gareth Porter
Toni Cooke
Donal Dempsey
Frank Gormley
Nigel Henderson
Gordon Elliott
Justin Sherriff
Richard Sherriff

Written submissions were received from:

Catherine Bird
Frank Gormley
Peter McCabe
David Scott
Ulster Women's Hockey Union
Aidan Kidney
Tom O'Donoghue
Graham Quincey
Sally Bell
Raymond Hughes
John Jermyn (Sen)