

# ULSTER HOCKEY

**Inspire - Build - Sustain**



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# About Ulster Hockey

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Ulster Hockey is one of four affiliated branches that together form Hockey Ireland. Hockey Ireland, as the overall governing body for the sport across the island, is the principal body responsible for the development of hockey at all levels. In its relationship with Hockey Ireland, Ulster Hockey has responsibility for the administration, development, and delivery of hockey within Ulster. Following the amalgamation of the Ulster Branch of the then Irish Hockey Association (UBIHA) and the Ulster Women's Hockey Union (UWHU) to form the Ulster Hockey Union (UHU) in May 2009.

Ulster Hockey currently supports the efforts of 27 men's and 50 women's clubs (Men & Women) and 12,000 members and players across the Province. The headquarters of Ulster Hockey is in Belfast.

Ulster Hockey works with a range of public bodies to deliver on its key strategic objectives. Core to this work is providing support and services to clubs, members and players which strengthens the ongoing development and delivery of sport within Ulster.

In the development of the current Ulster Hockey strategic plan 2021-26, Ulster Hockey consulted extensively with Board members, staff, volunteers and players - young and old - to identify the key issues and challenges facing the organisation and priorities that need to be addressed in the short, medium, and longer-term. Throughout the process, it was clear that stakeholders' concerns were centred on sustaining the expectations associated with modern club activities, including administration, coaching, umpiring and increasingly, statutory obligations.

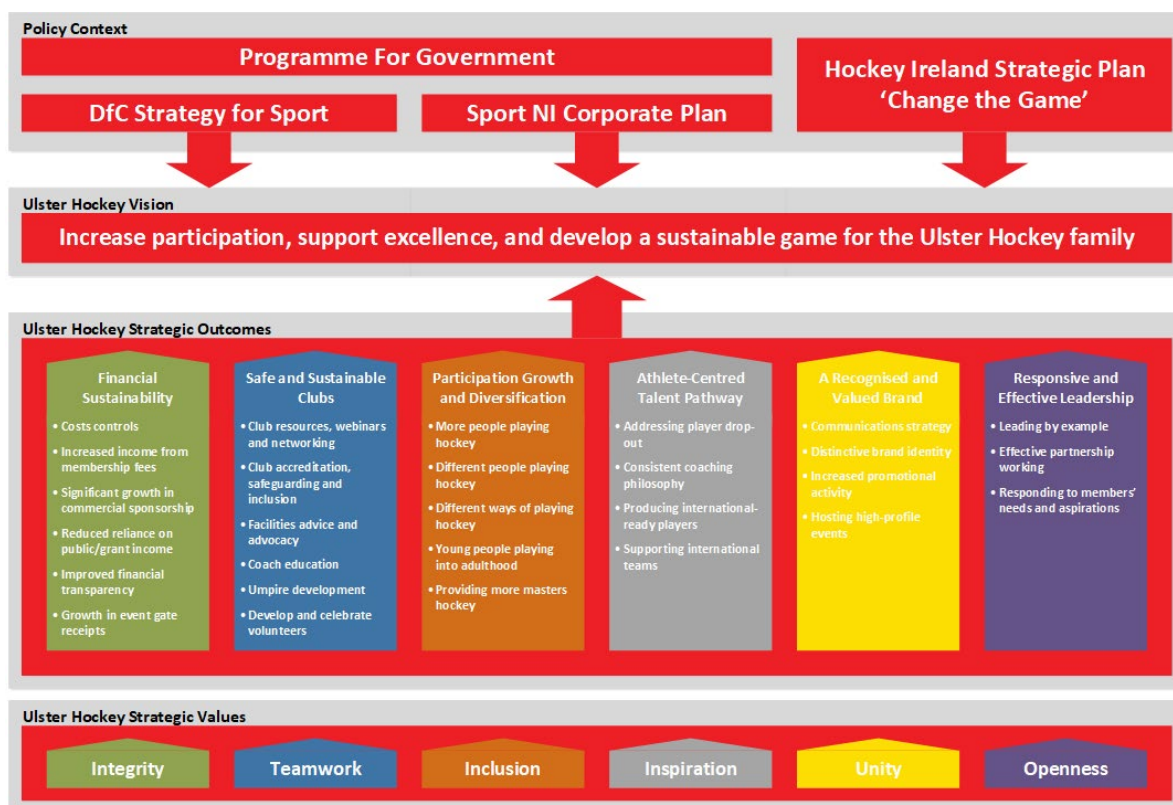
These issues were underpinned by a desire to respond to the increasing demands placed on existing volunteers, which were particularly acute for clubs with comparatively few members. There was also a sense that any strategic plan first needed to establish a sustainable framework within which all clubs could progress and which would offer additional targeted interventions to address the key issues and challenges for Ulster Hockey and its clubs across the Province. These were very real concerns for the supporters of Hockey in Ulster even before the events of early 2020, but the severity of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and its aftermath will shape the activities of Ulster Hockey for some time to come and assuredly for the timescale of this plan.

Evidence gathered in the strategic consultation process has indicated a level of dissatisfaction with the competitive structures which, aligned to challenges provided to Ulster Hockey in the management of its operations across club, schools and pathways hockey, has indicated a need for a full review of competitive structures of hockey in Ulster.

# Strategic Framework

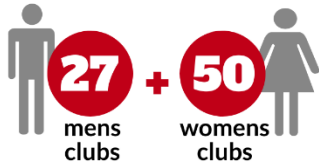
Over the last six months, Ulster Hockey consulted extensively with Board members, staff, volunteers and players - young and old - to identify the key issues and challenges facing the organisation and priorities that need to be addressed in the short, medium, and longer-term. Throughout the process, it was clear that stakeholders' concerns were centred on sustaining the expectations associated with modern club activities, including administration, coaching, umpiring and increasingly, statutory obligations.

This process has resulted in a Strategic Plan, designed to establish outcomes, objectives and related actions for the development of Hockey in Ulster over the period 2021 and 2026. It aims to ensure sustainability amongst all clubs and provide targeted growth in those priority areas identified in the plan. The emphasis on creating sustainable clubs and offering focused support for key initiatives over the lifetime of this plan emerged from a detailed engagement and consultation process, with the following strategic framework developed.



# Ulster Hockey - Where Are We Now?

## Clubs



## Players

**12,000**

total participant members at affiliated clubs



**7**

Tokyo Olympians



**35**

junior age grade players engaged in talent development programmes

**128**

in Ulster talent squads

**270**

in U15 Talent Development Programme

## Teams



**296**

junior teams



**209**

senior teams

## Coaches

**432**

accredited coaches



## Umpires

**146**

accredited umpires



## Schools

**78**

senior schools supported to deliver hockey

**208**

primary schools supported to deliver hockey



## Blitzes

**50**

school-based Youth Blitzes planned and delivered



## Social Media



**8,000**

Twitter followers



**7,000**

Facebook followers



**4,300**

Instagram followers

# Vision, Mission and Values

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## **Vision**

Through our strategic plan we want to inspire more people to get involved in hockey and more people to stay involved in all aspects of the game. Our Vision is therefore to:

**Increase participation, support excellence  
and develop a sustainable game for the Ulster Hockey family.**

## **Mission**

Ulster Hockey is responsible for the promotion and development of lifelong participation, delivering a quality experience and supporting clubs that allow both individuals and teams to enjoy, engage and excel at all levels in the sport. Our plan is to keep working towards this Mission Statement:

**INSPIRE** involvement, **BUILD** capacity and **SUSTAIN** Clubs

## **Values**

We have set ourselves a challenging and stretching vision. As momentum builds it will be increasingly important to draw upon values that build unity and purpose. With our people as our richest asset, our values will set the standard for how we work together in delivering the vision.

Our values will help the organisation grow as a hockey family and will set us apart. Bringing our plan to fruition through respectful engagement also ensures that we stay true to our founding values as we build our future vision together.

We Identified the values that best capture the spirit and culture of Ulster Hockey following in-depth consultation with our Board and Staff. Six broad areas emerged as important and distinctive to Ulster Hockey.

These are encapsulated within our values and articulated as:

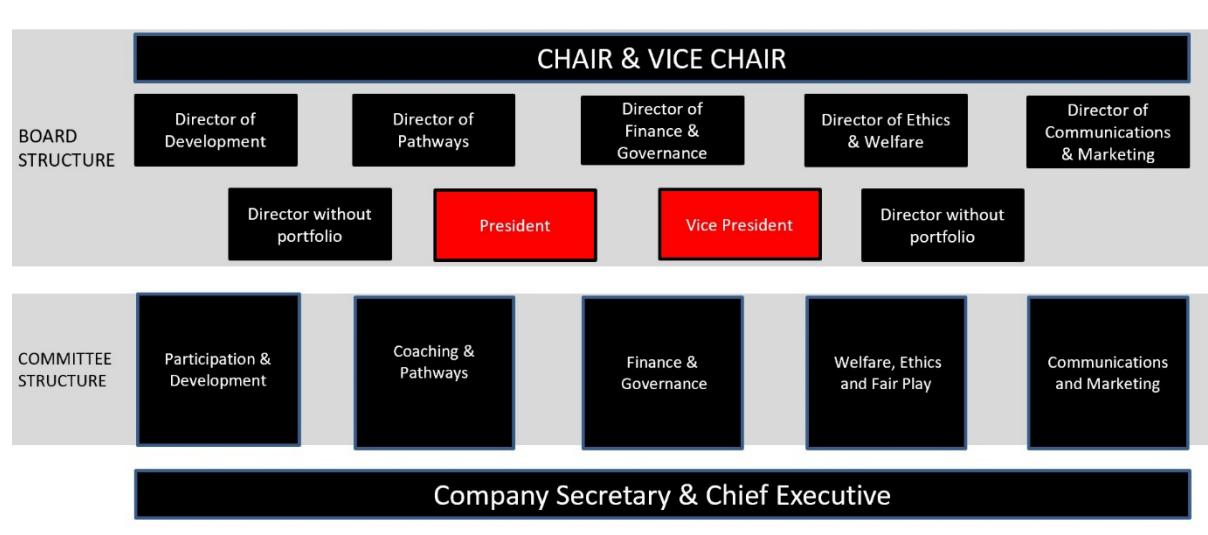
- **Inclusion**, which means we are respectful.
- **Integrity**, which means we are responsible.
- **Inspiration**, which means we lead.
- **Teamwork**, which means we are collaborative.
- **Openness**, which means we are engaging.
- **Unity**, which means we are pioneering.

As we deliver our Strategic Plan, Ulster Hockey will continue to evolve and grow. We will regularly review our values, vision, and mission to ensure they reflect the organisation we want to be. all our decisions.

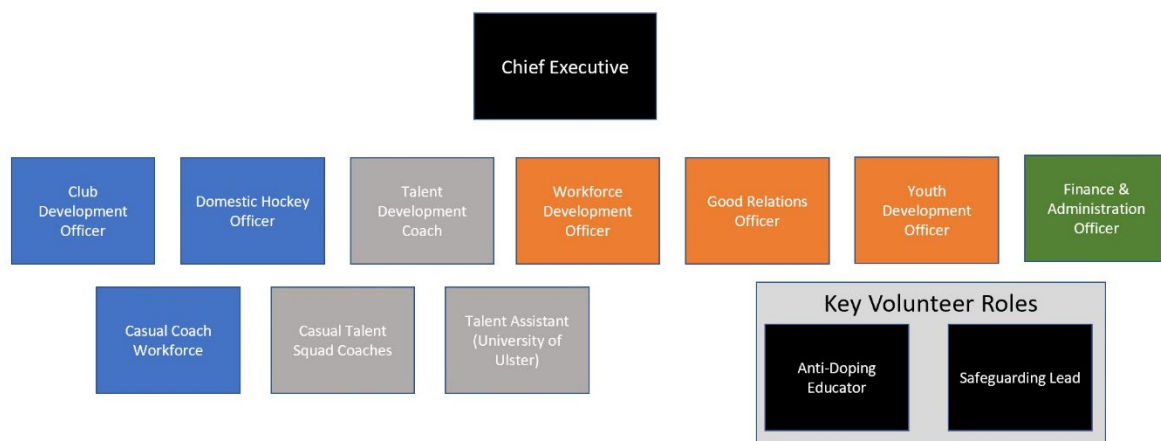
# The Structure

In parallel with the strategic development, Ulster Hockey has reviewed its legal structures and has been operating as an incorporated structure, Ulster Hockey Ltd, since April 2021.

The following Board & Committee structure is being implemented:



The current Ulster Hockey Executive structure - currently under review - is as follows:



# Current League & Competition Structures

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## Club Competitions

There are currently 13 ladies' leagues as follows:

Premier League  
Senior Leagues 1-3  
Junior Leagues 1-9

It is regulation that all 1<sup>st</sup> XI teams play in the Premier or Senior League structure.

There are currently 7 men's leagues as follows:

Premier League  
Intermediate League  
Junior Leagues 1-5

It is regulation that all 1<sup>st</sup> XI teams play in the Premier or Intermediate Leagues.

Hockey Ireland operates the EY Hockey Leagues (all Ireland) with the following Ulster teams involved:

<b>EYHL 1 (Men)</b>	<b>EYHL2 (Men)</b>	<b>EYHL1 (Women)</b>	<b>EYHL2 (Women)</b>
Lisnagarvey	Instonians	Pegasus	Ards
Annadale	Kilkeel	Belfast Harlequins	Queens University
Banbridge	Cookstown		Lurgan
	Mossley		

In each case (men & women) the Ulster representatives in EYHL 1 do not have any involvement in the Ulster Leagues; however, the EYHL 2 schedule is reduced with teams competing in both the national and provincial leagues. The format of the Ulster Premier Leagues is intended to allow for the involvement in both leagues ensuring the number of matches for each team is manageable.

## School Competitions

Currently there are 7 Boys' competitions from U13 to Senior involving around 23 teams; and 17 Girls' competitions across all ages involving 56 teams.

The senior events, which are most likely to impact on senior competitive hockey are as follows:



- McCullough Cup - Senior Boys - operates between September & December
- Girls Super League - Senior Girls - operates between September and December
- Belfast Telegraph Girls Senior Cup - operates between December and March
- John Minnis Estate Agents Burney Cup - operates between December and March

### **Talent Development Squads**

Ulster Hockey currently manages a talent development programme as follows:

- U21 Men's - 21 squad members participating in the Under 21 Interprovincial competitions.
- U16, U18 Boys and Girls - Average of 28 squad members per squad participating in Interprovincial competitions and international test match series, primarily against home country nations.
- U15 Talent Development Squads Boys and Girls - 130 girls and 90 boys, primarily operating as a training squad and participating competitively in 'festival' matches.

There is potential for members of the U21, U18 and U16 squads to also be selected for the Irish National JAG squads or senior squad.

# The Project

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## 1 Review scope

A full review of all aspects of competitive hockey in Ulster including, but not limited to, junior and adult league and cup structures, schools' hockey structures and pathways/performance structures.

## 2 Key elements

### a) Competitive structures

- (I) Assessment of current competition formats and the extent to which they promote participation
- (II) Assessment of current competition structures and the extent to which they promote participation
- (III) Assessment of current competition season plan (start/end of season, season length, fixture days)
- (IV) Assessment of communications and management of the competition structures.
- (V) identification of:
  - key actions/activities to promoting participation in all competitions (including at transition from schools/youth to adult hockey)
  - key barriers to promoting participation in all competitions (including at transition from schools/youth to adult hockey)

### b) Alignment of schools, club and pathway/performance hockey

Currently Ulster Hockey delivers hockey under 3 general themes - schools, club and pathway/performance hockey. With the demographic of hockey players resulting in an increased number of 15-18 year old players involved in adult club hockey, there is an increasing cross-over of players participating in all three thematic areas. The successful consultant will be expected to provide recommendations on the prioritisation, scheduling and management of the hockey calendar to allow each element to operate in compliment to the others and to ensure that player welfare is ensured.

## 3 Approach

- (i) To oversee the project, the Participation & Development Committee to convene a working group. It is proposed that the review be led by the Chair of the Competitions Committee (with support from the Chief Executive Officer and Ulster Hockey staff) and comprise the following:
  - Representative Competitions Committee
  - Representative from Schools Committee
  - Representative from Coaching & Pathways Committee
  - Umpire's representative

- Independent representative from another sport
- (ii) The Working party will report progress to the Participation & Development Committee and any recommendations will be subject to agreement by the Committee (and endorsement by the Board as necessary)
- (iii) It is intended that the review 'philosophy' will be broad-ranging, inclusive and deliberative. It is intended that the voice of all members of the Ulster Hockey family is heard.
- (iv) The review will be structured in terms of:
  - Evidence gathering phase - collecting information from clubs, players, volunteers and Ulster Hockey volunteers and staff using surveys and analysis of data
  - Recommendations phase - using focus groups to identify key areas to promote participation and develop options/ recommendations for consultation with key stakeholders

#### **4 Key deliverables**

The review will:

- (i) Develop an evidence base on player and clubs' attitudes towards participation - preferences, ideas to promote participation
- (ii) Review impact of competition changes and contribution towards promoting participation
- (iii) Review competition formats and consideration of future format to enhance participation
- (iv) Recommendations for promoting participation (including at transition)
- (v) Recommended structures for competitive adult hockey
- (vi) Recommended management and communication mechanisms between Ulster Hockey and members/clubs.
- (vii) Recommended alignment between schools, club and pathways/performance hockey

# The Process

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The project proposal should be concise and presented in report format to include the:

- The proposed budget based on daily inputs and all other expenses for each stage of the assignment;
- Outline of method and approach to address all aspects of the Terms of Reference outlined above as a minimum; and
- Details of key staff to be allocated to the project together with a resume of their experience and professional qualifications.

## TIMESCALE FOR THE PROJECT

It is envisaged that the following timeframe will apply

Stage	Timescale
Terms of Reference Issued	w/c 6 <sup>th</sup> June
Response Required to Terms of Reference	w/c 27 June
Appointment of Successful Consultant	w/c 4 <sup>th</sup> July
Initial evidence gathering phase (to include review of Ulster Branch cup competitions):	w/c 11 Jul - w/c 15 Aug
Developing options/ recommendations.	w/c 22 Aug - w/c 12 Sep
Submission of final report & implementation plan	w/c 26 <sup>th</sup> September
Presentation to members	October 2022

## MANAGEMENT

Ulster Hockey's Chief Executive will oversee the assignment. A reasonable number of project management meetings will take place between the consultants and the Ulster Hockey Chief Executive Marc Scott and the Competitions Committee Chair Iain Kelly, normally at the Ulster Hockey Office, Unit 5G, Stirling House, Castlereagh Road, Belfast, BT5 6BQ.

## BUDGET

The proposed budget should include all indicative costs related to the project (including travel and any other relevant expenses). The final budget available may be subject to agreement with the successful consultant on agreement of the final workplan.

# Tender Assessment

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## CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

The proposal will be considered against the following selection criteria. A two-stage process will be used to assess tenders for this project.

### Stage 1 - Selection Criteria

Professional Experience	Pass/Fail
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In order to move on to the evaluation process, Tenderers must clearly demonstrate that they meet the required level of professional ability detailed in the Format of Response listed above. Failure to demonstrate clear relevant experience will result in the elimination of your tender submission.

Those tenders which successfully demonstrate relevant experience will move on to stage 2 and their submission will then be evaluated against the following criteria

### Stage 2 - Award Criteria

Methodology	65%
Cost	35%

Service Providers should submit plans clearly detailing how they will deliver the requirements taking account of the criteria and requirements specified below. To be considered, each Tenderer must address the following key areas:

## **Professional Ability**

### Stage 1: Selection Criteria

In order to progress to the evaluation process, tenders must clearly demonstrate how they meet the minimum standard of experience detailed below.

As a minimum, the consultant must have five (5) year's relevant experience in the completion of similar assignments;

The consultant must clearly demonstrate that they have the minimum level of experience detailed above by providing detailed examples of previous assignments with dates. Experience must be presented in a format that is easily identifiable to the evaluation panel as to what relevant experience the consultant has. Examples provided must be structured to include:

- project title and brief summary;
- its relevance to this project;
- date the project was completed; and

- individual roles / duties within each project.

## **Stage 2 - Award Criteria**

### **Methodology**

Full details of your methodology for carrying out the Contract Requirements. This must include proposals to address the following key issues:

- i. Reference and adherence where applicable to the requirements within this document;
- ii. Robust methodology for developing the strategic plan demonstrating both consultation and innovation in approach.

### **Cost**

Full details of the proposed cost should be provided. This should include the names of each member of staff to be involved in the project and daily rates against the relevant key activities.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Ulster Hockey is not bound to accept the lowest or any tender.

Tenders are to remain open for acceptance for a period of two months from the date for return of tenders or any extended return date notified by Chief Executive Marc Scott.

Ulster Hockey may require the tenderers to extend the validity of the tenders at any time prior to the award of the contract.

Execution of a contract will only be deemed to have taken place when Ulster Hockey issues an Engagement Letter accepting a tender incorporating any amendments or variations to the tender agreed by both parties. No tender or a part of it will be deemed to have been accepted unless such an acceptance shall have been notified to the tenderer in writing.

## **SUBMISSION OF PROPOSAL**

Responses to the brief should arrive with Marc Scott no later than 5pm on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022 by email to [marc.scott@ulsterhockey.com](mailto:marc.scott@ulsterhockey.com). Tenders or additional information received after the deadline will not be considered.

## **OTHER CONDITIONS**

**Ownership of Work papers and Supporting Documentation** - All workpapers and supporting documentation for reviews and other work will become the property of Ulster Hockey.

**Employment of Staff by the Contractor** - The contractor shall select and employ suitable and competent persons for the performance of the services under this contract. Ulster Hockey may, without giving any reason, direct the contractor to remove any employee from the performance of the services under this contract and replace him/her with another suitable and competent person, and the contractor shall at once comply with any such direction.

**Sub-contracting and Assignment** - The contractor may not sub-contract the services or any part of them and may not assign this agreement in advance or any part of it without the written consent of Ulster Hockey.

**Termination and Default of the Contractor** - Ulster Hockey may terminate the contract if the performance of the contractor is not of the required standard. In such circumstances, Ulster Hockey will serve on the contractor a letter stating how their performance has deteriorated and they will be given 28 days to improve the standard, or the contract will be terminated immediately. Ulster Hockey will not accept any responsibility for any costs which the contractor may incur as a result of the contract being terminated in this manner.

**Conflicts of Interest** - The tenderers will be required to register any potential conflicts of interest they may have for this contract. The onus will be on the tenderer to contact Ulster Hockey if there is any potential for conflict of interest be it professional, commercial or personal.

**Standard Format of Documentation** - Tenderers should be aware that it is standard Ulster Hockey procedure to ask for documents in a form that is compatible with Ulster Hockey's word processing systems. The successful tenderer will be expected to provide reports in this form. The current system used by Ulster Hockey is Microsoft Word for Windows.



ULSTER  
HOCKEY

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125  
Years of  
Hockey  
in Ulster