



Development Planning Guide

Introduction

A club development plan is a document which details the strategy the club will follow for planning and sustainable development of the club. A development plan should set out the areas for development over the next 3-5 years.

Developing a good quality plan that sets the future direction of your club is one of the most important things you can do. Effective planning needs to be a shared process that involves the entire club, to gain varied views and opinions, as well as the full club consensus on the best approach of taking the club forward.

Who is involved?

- Committee members – As the leaders in the club they will give good insights into where they feel the club needs to grow and develop
- Coaches – As the technical experts in the club they will provide vital information in where the club needs to develop within the pool
- Club members – As the key stakeholders in the club the members need to have their say on the overall direction of the club
- Young People – If you have under 18's it is vital you gather the thoughts of the young people in the club as they are the reason the club exists
- Swim Ireland Support Officer – Your Support Officer can provide unbiased advice and support
- Partners and Stakeholders – It is important to gather the thoughts of all external partners as their continued support and engagement is vital for success.

Clubmark

The overall aim of the Clubmark scheme is to support, recognise and reward Swim Ireland affiliated clubs who achieve the highest of club standards. Following successful completion of the programme, Clubmark SI will act as a mark of quality for participating clubs. It is open to all Aquatics clubs who are currently registered with Swim Ireland. The accreditation programme focuses upon attaining and keeping pace with best practice if not leading in areas of best practice with cutting edge ideas. To achieve Clubmark clubs will complete a survey, scoring over 70% and prepare a club development plan.

Where is your club now?

Use the Clubmark survey document to assess your areas of strength and for improvement. The survey is broken into the following sections:

- Club Governance – This will look at how the club operates in relation to leading, managing, and planning within the club.
- Engagement – This will show how well the club is engaging with its members and providing effective communication across the club internally and externally.
- Discipline Specific – This will evaluate the club in what it provides in relation to the disciplines and whether it is in line with best practice.



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SWOT analysis

A SWOT analysis will assess the following:

- **Strengths** – Characteristics of your club that give you an advantage
- **Weakness** – The limitations of your club or areas where you could improve
- **Opportunities** – External opportunities available to your club that could help you expand or develop
- **Threats** – External factors that could create problems or barriers for your club

Consult with your club members

Once you have completed the Survey, SWOT analysis and gathered further information it is vital to discuss the findings and next steps for the club.

- **Committee Meeting** - Discuss findings and way forward with the club committee at the next committee meeting
- **Survey** - Undertake a survey with club members to gather further insights into the best way to move forward

Club Vision

A good vision statement should be realistic, short, simple, specific to your club and leave nothing open to interpretation. It is important when creating a vision to let your imagination go and dare to think big. It is an aspirational description of what a club would like to achieve or accomplish in the future.

Development Plan Strands

Break down the areas (strands) of the club that you wish to improve. They should also reflect the analysis from your Clubmark survey, SWOT analysis and consultation. As a club you will only need to identify the strands that you wish to work on and develop. This may mean that only 3-5 of the suggested strands are relevant to your own club, you may also have others which you wish to include.

Suggested strands:

- Governance & Operations
- Financial Management
- Member, Club and Youth Engagement
- Recruitment, Succession & Retention Planning
- Education & Training
- Aquatic Planning
- Facility & Equipment
- Increasing Participation & Membership at the Club
- Club Links (e.g. School Club Links, Youth Organisations, Other Sports)



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Aims and Objectives

Aims – Are statements of intent. They are usually written in broad terms. They set out what you hope to achieve by the end of the development plan.

Objectives – To ensure the development plan is manageable the aims need to be broken down into small objectives (actions) which are realistic and achievable. These are the short-term steps that will help you to achieve your aim within a time frame and with available resources.

When creating and setting the objectives for your actions you should consider the SMART method. The SMART method helps push you further, gives you a sense of direction, and helps you organise and reach your goals.

- **Specific:** Identify what objective the club wants to achieve. These need to be clear and precise so members are aware what the club is working towards.
- **Measurable:** Is the club able to measure whether it is meeting the objectives or not? It is important to set objectives that the club can monitor and track to see what progress is being made.
- **Achievable:** Are the objectives achievable? Whilst it is important to dream big it is important to be realistic in what the club can achieve with the available resources
- **Relevant:** Are the objectives specific to your clubs needs and vision? Every club is unique, and you need to ensure your objectives match your club, not the one down the road.
- **Timed:** When does the club want to achieve the set objectives? Clear timeframes are very important to ensure that everyone is aware of when objectives will be met and helps keeps everyone to task.

Draft Development Plan

Use the Swim Ireland development plan template put your plan together. Once you have a draft version ready this should be presented to the club committee for feedback. Following final editing the development plan should be presented to club members.

More details of the Clubmark programme are available on Swim Ireland Website