

“That the current reorganisation of the Directorate structures of Cork County Council would include a section dedicated to Recreation and Amenity, the functions of which would include development of a Recreation and Amenity Strategy for the County, co-ordination of Recreation and Amenity developments throughout the Municipal Districts and development of the proposed network of cycling infrastructure throughout County Cork. Easily accessible Recreation and Amenity opportunities are critical for healthy communities and provision of same is a local authority function which is almost always welcome.”

Recreation and amenity infrastructure of all kinds is vitally important to establishing and maintaining the quality of life in a community and a region.
Parks and recreation programs and services contribute in a significant way to the physical and mental health of people of all ages.
They are essential for social engagement.
They are valuable to creating and enhancing community spirit.
They help to foster environmental responsibility

They are also very important for the economy. Parks, trails and recreation facilities increase property values and tax revenue. Quality parks and recreation are cited as one of the top three reasons that business cites in relocation decisions.

Provision of recreation and amenity facilities is one of local authority’s core functions. And we as a Council have developed some excellent sites and facilities. But there is still a deficit. Some of our staff have real expertise in the development of recreational facilities and if that expertise were collated in a dedicated section, it would have the drive to co-ordinate and promote cohesive and structured integration of recreation and amenity facilities in everything we do.

Dublin City Council has a Cultural and Amenities Section.
Cork City has a Recreation, Amenities and Emergency Services Section
Tipperary County Council has a Community and Economic Development Section which includes the development of cultural and recreational areas
Waterford City and County Council has a Community and Sport Department

All I’m asking is that within the Municipal District Directorate, the County Council would incorporate a small but distinct section with a specific focus on the co-ordination of development of Recreation and Amenity facilities throughout the county. Their expertise will feed down through the Municipal District structure to the Area Offices who are doing the work on the ground. We need that kind of structure if we are to optimise limited opportunities for funding, think in an innovative way and advance positively even the plans and strategies we already have in place.

The irony is that although as local authority we have a defined set of core functions, recreation and amenity is one which always gives us huge bang for our buck. It brings pleasure. It promotes Cork County Council in a positive way. It is worth investing in and it is worth being the best we can be at it.