



**An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir,
Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán**
Department of Tourism, Culture,
Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

Oifig an Ard-Rúnaí
Office of the Secretary General

14 July 2021

Ref: S0460 PAC33

Ms Éilis Fallon

Committee Secretariat

Committee of Public Accounts

Leinster House

Dublin 2 D02 XR20

Dear Ms. Fallon,

Thank you for your letter on behalf of the Public Accounts Committee forwarding correspondence from Deputy Chris Andrews regarding the Dundalk Ice Rink.

The ice rink facility in question is owned by Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT). This Department has no role in relation to buildings owned by DkIT and or decisions taken by DkIT regarding the use of such buildings. Accordingly, I am not in a position to provide any information as to why the building has been left vacant or why its upkeep has not been maintained. Questions in this regard are more appropriate to the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.

With regard to the Irish Ice Hockey Association (IIHA) both this Department and Sport Ireland are supportive of the efforts that the National Governing Body (NGB) is making to secure a permanent ice rink facility in Ireland and their strategic approach to growing their sport and increasing participation at all levels in their sport.

The IIHA has identified the provision of a permanent ice rink facility as being vital to their strategic plans to grow their sport. Sport Ireland, the statutory agency tasked with promoting sport in Ireland, has been working in close partnership with the IIHA and is committed to supporting the long-term strategic development of the sport in Ireland.

While I am aware that the IIHA was engaged in discussions with DkIT regarding a lease on the ice rink facility, those discussions are a commercial matter between the two parties and this Department has no role or involvement in the matter. The provision of facilities and any lease arrangements entered into by NGBs are generally a matter for NGBs themselves. The Minister with responsibility for Sport and the Gaeltacht, Jack Chambers, met with representatives of the IIHA on 23 April and they outlined to the Minister the efforts they have been making to secure a suitable ice rink facility for their sport, including their discussions with

DkIT. While the Minister is of the view that it is unsatisfactory to see an existing sports facility in the State that is not available for use by the relevant sport, it is not open to him to intervene with DkIT in relation to this matter. Members of the Committee might be interested to know that Sport Ireland is in the early stages of conducting a feasibility study on the development of a permanent ice rink facility as part of the Sport Ireland National Sports Campus. As part of this process, Sport Ireland met with a number of relevant stakeholders including the IIHA and will continue to engage with them as the feasibility study progresses.

Yours sincerely,

Katherine Licker

Secretary General

Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media