

Dear Deputy,

Tolka Park is a Dublin institution and is now in its centenary year. The history of the site goes back further than 1924, as it has been part of the city estate since 1539.

Save Tolka Park (STP) is a coalition of local residents, football fans and activists, which launched a campaign in June 2021 to oppose the sale and rezoning of Tolka Park.

In February 2022, Shelbourne FC made a proposal to DCC to purchase a leasehold for Tolka Park. Subsequently, the [Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028](#) came into effect, confirming that DCC is committed to the [retention and redevelopment](#) of Tolka Park as a sports stadium.

This was an endorsement of the democratic will of the 1,500 written submissions to the Development Plan in support of the retention of Tolka Park, the vast majority of which were made by residents of the DCC area.

As you may be aware, DCC management & Shelbourne FC have agreed a [deal](#) for a 250 year leasehold of the stadium. However, DCC councillors have the final say on this proposal.

I believe the deal is broadly in line with the core principles of the STP campaign, on the following basis:

- The land would remain in public ownership by virtue of it being a leasehold as opposed to a freehold, and its zoning classification (Z9 - recreational amenity) protected.
- The use of the land is protected, in that if it is used for anything other than sporting use, the lease reverts back to DCC. Further, the lease cannot be transferred or sublet without DCC consent.
- The length of the leasehold would help to maintain the site for football whilst protecting against speculation and maintaining public freehold ownership. Such leases have precedent within football, as Cobh Ramblers enjoy a 99 year lease on St Colman's Park and Everton's new stadium will be a 200 year lease.
- It provides equality of access for Shelbourne's Women's League of Ireland team in Tolka Park. Under the alternative plan of Shelbourne FC moving to Dalymount Park and Tolka Park being demolished, it was unclear if Shelbourne FC's women's team (and Bohemian FC's) would have been accommodated in a new-build Dalymount Park.
- It contains provisions that Shelbourne FC must carry out necessary refurbishment on the stadium, at their own expense.
- The deal requires that Shelbourne FC must employ two full-time 'Football in the Community Officers'. The STP campaign advocated for the retention of Shelbourne FC in Tolka Park, given it would help grow participation in the game in the North-East of the city. These officers, working through a community football club, will assist in this, especially with regards women and girls.
- The Tolka Park Community Hub CLG holding the lease would protect against eventualities such as the insolvency of Shelbourne FC or a hostile takeover of the club, in addition to the protections within the lease itself. The campaign advocates for representation on the CLG of football fans and relevant local stakeholders, while also calling for increased access to Tolka Park by local football clubs.

Therefore, I would ask that you encourage your party colleagues to vote **YES** to this proposal. I will be following the vote during the forthcoming council meeting on the matter and the outcome will **strongly influence my vote in the June council elections and subsequent elections**. Thank you for your time.

Yours Sincerely