



Horse Sport Ireland moving to new state-of-the-art headquarters

1. What is the main purpose of the venue?

- HSI believes that a Centre of Excellence as part of a hub-and-spoke model for the development of the industry is a much needed venture to underpin the industry. Such a centre will enable a holistic approach to the sector.
- The centre will provide a world class environment for production of horses, provision of equine services, industry training and promotion of an outstanding product. It will bring much cohesion to the sector, providing a focal point for the industry.

2. Will the centre compete against other equestrian businesses in the sector?

- No. The Centre of Excellence primary focus will be training and education. Horse Sport Ireland does not seek to displace other equestrian venues who run competitions within the sector.

3. Is there adequate room for expansion

- Yes, the demised site is 30 acres. Given the foundation equestrian infrastructure on site already, it is proposed that ancillary complementary additions will be made to the site over time, depending on the needs arising.

4. Will all needs of all disciplines be fully fulfilled?

- Given the diverse nature of the sport horse industry, HSI has sought to provide common usage infrastructure for our disciplines.

5. What are the various phases of the project?

- Horse Sport Ireland will take up usage of the facility from 1 March 2021 for the equestrian facilities. Subject to a planning application with Dublin County Council, construction of the new Headquarters, Horse Sport Ireland will move to the Greenogue entirely by February/March 2022.

6. Will this take funds from the industry and sport.

- No. The cost of the lease agreement will be offset by no longer having to rent our current building in Naas and consolidating other ancillary costs, such as storage facilities.
- The current plans for the move to Greenogue for training and the new headquarters will be cost neutral to HSI whilst adding significantly to the capabilities and facilities available to the sector and affiliate community.
- It is not intended to compete with venue owners in holding commercial events.

7. Are there rooms available for meetings, how large?

- The combined conference room will be able to accommodate approximately 100 plus people. The HQ building will have a range of other meeting rooms to accommodate various types of meetings.

8. What type of agreement is Horse Sport Ireland entering into with Greenogue Equestrian?

- Horse Sport Ireland will enter into an arms-length 35-year commercial lease for the entire 30 acres demised site, which is renewable, and includes appropriate break options and an option to purchase.
- The owners of Greenogue are providing existing facilities and committing to building the additional facilities without the risk to HSI of overrun

9. What other locations were considered

- The search for a suitable HQ and COE location was in the context of the existing offices in Naas and associated staff relocation considerations.
- A high-level evaluation of over 20 equestrian premises was carried out by an external property professional augmented by industry knowledge.
- Various levels of engagement was undertaken with potential venues before progressing the Greenogue option

10. What if the planning permission status of the project?

- Greenogue has planning permission for all developments currently on site with further permission for additional equestrian buildings on site and is in full compliance with the conditions attached to the granted permissions.
- The additional planned offices and equestrian buildings will all require planning permission and application to South Dublin County Council will be lodged over the coming weeks
- HSI would greatly appreciate any letters of support submitted to the Council when the planning is submitted.

11. What happens if there are objections to the planning process?

- Planning objections by their very nature will delay the delivery of the project, with the potential to scupper this fantastic development for the equestrian community.
- HSI and the owner of Greenogue will exhaust all planning processes to secure planning for the centre.
- If planning is not achieved the Board of HSI do not see a viable alternative to the Greenogue proposal that will deliver a focal hub for the sport horse sector within five to seven years, if ever.

12. What are the various phases of the project?

- The first phase of the project is to centre the HP training activities for Irish Squads at Greenogue where appropriate with some extensions to various sand arenas.
- The second phase, subject to planning and timely construction, is to move into the new HSI headquarters building in Q1 2022. This also includes the equine reproduction centre.
- The third planned phase, subject to planning and funding, is to construct the large 45m x 90m indoor training arena. This will be subject to grant funding applications and philanthropic funding.

13. Has HSI advocated for funding for regional centres?

- HSI is acutely aware of the need to investment in regional centres and had made several approaches to funding partners for additional funding of regional infrastructures.
- The funding options for regional venues are very limited due to the private ownership structures of these operations.
- Additionally, the inclusion of equine breeders and producers in TAMS and other schemes has been requested on numbers occasions with DAFM.

14. Why did HSI not apply for large scale capital funding from Department of Sport for a COE

- During 2019 HSI carried out extensive preparatory work with a Kildare premises for an application under the scheme. Unfortunately, due to difficulties in securing appropriate tenure and title on the site it was not feasible to proceed with an application. The work done on this project was incorporated into the current feasibility study.
- On becoming aware the HSI would not be able to submit an application in 2019 it was then decided to support the RDS in their application to redevelop the Anglesey Stand that was subsequently successful
- Moving to Greenogue, with significant tenure rights will greatly assist HSI in future applications for State support.

15. What facilities will be on offer for HSI affiliates?

- All affiliates have been offered the opportunity to co-locate their administration activities with HSI at Greenogue. This will be on a flexible license agreement basis at favourable rates with a range of staff facilities.
- Additionally, there will be with access to a range of meeting and training rooms for up to 120 people.
- HSI envisages the existing co-located affiliates will move with HSI, with many others have indicated a keen desire to join HSI at Greenogue.
- It is expected that the new Centre will become a focal hub for sport horse equestrian activities and networking together with fostering closer links within the community.

16. What benefit will the centre bring to equestrian training and education?

- The proposed accommodation includes significant provision for training and education facilities integrated with the arena infrastructure.
- It is envisaged that the new facility will allow HSI to lead equestrian education and professional development, retaining talent and creating local and international opportunities

17. What feedback have you received since announcing the move to Greenogue?

- The response to the centre has been very supportive with positive feedback from sports
- HSI has been engaging actively with affiliates and stakeholders since the announcement to correct any misinformation circulating in the sector.

Further Information:

Discussion Groups:

HSI began by determining the core services of the Centre including research and knowledge transfer, training of all types and levels, equine services, events, networking, and collaboration with other entities. Six expert panels were set up to discuss these different elements. HSI sought external assistance with the appointment of an independent consultant, Kotinos Partners, appointed to carry out the discussions.

Review of Comparable facilities:

HSI also carried out a review of the international Federation in Germany (Warrendorf) and other comparable facilities in Europe and the United States. Following the panel discussions and reviews of comparable facilities, HSI created an architecture briefing document. This was a very detailed scoping document designed to set out and meet the needs of the equestrian industry into the future.

Business Feasibility Study:

A detailed business feasibility study for the centre was also carried out. Again, HSI sought external assistance with the appointment of an independent consultant to carry out a feasibility study following a competitive request for tender. Kotinos Partners, now Tenoa were appointed to undertake the study.

Site Reviews:

The work of the sub-committee has been ongoing for two years and has involved consideration of many different locations, facilities and business models. The HSI executive engaged with a range of potential sites in Kildare and beyond. It engaged a Property Valuer and adviser to review property and land offerings as well as availability of property to purchase, rent or develop.

Funding:

HSI analysed possible funding models for the centre as well as value for money and sustainability issues. As part of the budgetary submission process, HSI engaged Colm McCarthy to assist and advise on the 2021 submission and included within that submission was a request for significant capital funding for a new facility.

The 2021 Budget Submission to DAFM included a detailed proposal seeking funding for a national training and production centre which showed that a capital budget of €11.75 million would be required to develop a green field site as a national centre.

Unfortunately funding for such a project was not available. Although several suitable sites had been identified and evaluated, the cost of building the necessary facilities for a comprehensive equestrian establishment remained an insurmountable stumbling block.

HSI has funding to run its core business but all of this is needed to fund its breeding incentives and sponsorship of equestrian sports activities. HSI has never had access to capital funding to allow it to fund the development of a major piece of infrastructure such as a national training centre or headquarters. In the absence of such funding, the sub-committee turned its focus to sourcing a training centre that would not require major capital funding while continuing to provide the best service it could from its rented offices in Millenium Park, Naas.

Greenogue Lease Agreement:

Greenogue Equestrian which was built in 2017 became available to lease. A considerable amount of due diligence was done to assess the costs versus benefits of such a lease and at the end of that, the Board of HSI took the decision that this was an excellent facility that could be afforded within the current HSI budget.

In addition, and very importantly for HSI, the Greenogue site does not require upfront capital funding from HSI or the state. All other options reviewed would have required a large amount of upfront capital which would be very difficult to raise, as well as resulting in significant time delay as well as the associated additional development risks.

The Board of HSI considered all aspects of this review; it factored in its contribution and how it would meet the needs of the industry as well as the very positive feedback received during the process. It was unanimously united in the view that Greenogue is the most commercially viable option and the best option for the equestrian industry. On this basis, it decided to give authority to the acting Chief Executive to sign Heads of Terms to proceed with Greenogue to take a long lease on this facility as a headquarters for HSI and the industry.

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