



**Tithe an
Oireachtais**
**Houses of the
Oireachtas**

An Comhchoiste um Thalmhaíocht, Bia agus Muir

Tionscal na gCon

Joint Committee on Agriculture, Food and the Marine

The Greyhound Industry

No. AFM 011

January 2016



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Chairman's Foreword



In July 2014, Indecon Consultants carried out a study (commissioned by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine) on certain matters relating to the Bord na gCon (the Irish Greyhound Board). Following the publication of the Review, the Joint Committee on Agriculture, Food and the Marine (the Committee) deemed it necessary to examine the greyhound industry in Ireland with a view to drafting a report with recommendations for legislative change. Initially, the Committee met with representatives from Bord na gCon on its response to the Review in November 2014. Following this meeting, the Committee agreed to include this topic as part of its work programme for 2015.

Because the Greyhound Industry (Amendment) Bill had been listed on the Government's Legislative Programme for 2015, the Committee anticipated that the General Scheme of the Bill would be published during the year 2015 and referred to the Committee for pre-legislative scrutiny. However, when the Committee established that the Bill was not going to be referred to it for pre-legislative scrutiny, the Committee decided to pursue its own examination of the greyhound industry in Ireland.

It was against this background that the Committee held a meeting on 20 October 2015 with the Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (*with special responsibility for the greyhound industry*) and representatives from Bord na gCon and the Irish Greyhound Owners and Breeders Federation.

In this Report, the Committee makes recommendations which it believes may address the issues concerning the industry and influence the general policy debate and drafting of future legislation.

We are grateful for the assistance of the Library and Research Services and the assistance of the Committee Secretariat in producing this report. I would like to express our appreciation to all those who participated in the Committee deliberations.

I commend this Report to the Minister of State, Mr Tom Hayes T.D. who has responsibility for the greyhound industry and anticipate that the recommendations put forward by the Committee can be taken into account when drafting the heads of the Greyhound Industry (Amendment) Bill.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Doyle', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Andrew Doyle T.D.

Chairman

Introduction

The Joint Committee for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (hereinafter referred to as “the Committee”) is examining the ‘*Greyhound Racing Industry in Ireland*’ as part of its 2015 Work Programme. The Committee held a hearing with stakeholders on 20 October 2015. Oral presentations were made and written submissions supplied to the Committee by the following stakeholders:

- The Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (*with special responsibility for horticulture, forestry, the greyhound industry and food safety*), Mr Tom Hayes T.D., [Presentation [here](#)];
- IGOBF [Presentation [here](#)];
- Bord na gCon (BnG) [Presentation A: CEO Geraldine Larkin [here](#) and Presentation B: Chairman Phil Meaney [here](#)].

Written submissions (only) were also received from the following stakeholders:

- Dr. MJ Fox, Orchard Greyhound Sanctuary (Sole representative of the welfare community on BnG’s Welfare Committee);
- Greyhound Rescue Association of Ireland (GRAI);
- Irish Coursing Club (ICC);
- Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ISPCA);
- Welfare Members of the International Greyhound Forum.

The aim of this Report is to provide a brief and succinct overview of the Greyhound Racing Industry in Ireland, to detail the main points raised by stakeholders in oral and written submissions provided to the Committee and to identify recommendations arising from its overall examination of the topic. Issues are treated thematically as it is not within the scope of this Report to address each issue raised in isolation.

The outline of this Paper is as follows:

- [Section 1](#) provides an overview of the economic and social background to the industry;
- [Section 2](#) refers to the governance and administration of the industry and includes a summary of the main stakeholders and their respective remits;
- [Section 3](#) refers to the funding of BnG, a statutory, commercial semi-state body responsible for licencing and developing the industry;
- [Section 4](#) refers to the current situation regarding regulation, animal welfare and rearing/breeding of greyhounds;

- [Section 5](#): provides a thematic summary of the main arguments put forward at the public hearings and written submissions provided by industry stakeholders and the corresponding Recommendations identified by the Committee.
- A series of additional information is also appended to this Paper. [Appendix 1](#) provides an overview of the composition of BnG's turnover (revenue) from 2007 to 2013. [Appendix 2](#) provides a summary of relevant legislation applicable to the industry. [Appendix 3](#) provides a summary of the C&AG Special Report into the Development of Limerick Greyhound Racing Stadium and [Appendix 4](#) refers to the Indecon Review into BnG and its recent response regarding implementation of the Indecon recommendations.

Overview and Recommendations

- It is estimated that the greyhound racing industry in Ireland supports approximately 10,300 jobs and generates €500m for the exchequer;
- BnG is the statutory, commercial State body responsible for the promotion, development and regulation of the industry. The Board was established under the *Greyhound Industry Act, 1958* with the objective of improving and developing the greyhound industry. BnG falls under the aegis of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (since May 2010);
- According to the GRAI, for the years 2011-2013, 47,702 greyhounds were named / registered for racing in Ireland. 18,690 were exported to the UK. According to the GRAI, Ireland produces and exports more greyhounds than any other country in the world;
- There are 17 licenced racetracks / stadia spread across Ireland. BnG directly owns and manages eight of these and have at least some involvement in a further three. Six racetracks are privately owned. Between 2002 and 2010, 18,211 greyhound meetings were held across Ireland, attended by 10.25 million people.
- Funding for BnG comes from a variety of sources including (a) Stadia / racetrack admission fees; (b) concession fees from restaurant facilities; (c) a percentage deduction from totalisator¹ (tote) pools; (d) a turnover charge on on-course bookmaker betting; and (e) exchequer funding (allocation from the HGRF). Since the establishment of the Fund in 2001, BnG has received approximately €174.5m from the exchequer. A total of €14.8m will be provided in 2016.
- The recession in Ireland has caused a significant decline in the commercial viability of the industry. Over the past decade, total income peaked at €78m (2007) but fell to €39.8m in 2014, a fall of approximately 49%. This was mainly driven by a sharp fall (55%) in daily activity revenue from €63.4m (2007) to €28.8m (2013), a fall of 55%. Exchequer income, from the HGRF, fell 19.7% over the same period.
- One prominent issue in recent years has been BnG's debt of €21 million, arising from the development of a new stadium in Limerick at Greenpark which opened in October 2010. The development has been the subject of a C&AG [Special Report](#) (published in August 2014). This has effectively contributed to the doubling of BnG's borrowing compared to 2008 levels.

¹ Totalisator refers to a system whereby investments (i.e. bets) are accepted and aggregated, and winnings are calculated, declared and paid on a proportional basis depending on the result of a race or series of races following prescribed formulae.

- A [Review](#) by Indecon Consultants into ‘Certain Matters relating to BnG’ published in July 2014 made 27 recommendations to improve the financial position and commercial viability of BnG under four headings (1) governance (2) finance (3) regulation and (4) animal welfare. One particularly prominent aspect was the recommendation that an asset disposal plan be compiled comprising the sale of land sites in Limerick and Cork and the sale of the Harold’s Cross racetrack / stadium in Dublin. In terms of revenue, the Review also states that Harold’s Cross is the second largest track after Shelbourne Park, Dublin.
- A [response](#) to the Review featuring a detailed implementation timeline was published by BnG in October 2014. A progress report was provided to the Committee in October 2015 and is replicated in **Appendix 4** of this paper.

Recommendations

The Committee has identified recommendations under the following headings:

UP-TO-DATE ECONOMIC OVERVIEW OF THE INDUSTRY (Section 1 refers)

Recommendation 1:

The figures (approximately 10,000 people employed in an industry worth an estimated €500m) cited by the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine in recent responses to Parliamentary Questions ([June 2015](#) and [July 2015](#)) are based on the April 2011 Jim Power report ‘*The Economic and Financial Significance of the Irish Greyhound Industry in Ireland*’ commissioned by BnG. The Power report itself uses 2009 figures. The Committee recommends that a compilation of an up-to-date economic assessment of the industry including a full breakdown of staff working in all category levels (both public and private) in the industry should be considered in order to more accurately reflect the current state of the industry in Ireland

GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION (Section 2 refers)

Recommendation 2:

The Committee recommends that the integrity of the Control Committee must be maintained and made accountable to the relevant Oireachtas Committee.

Recommendation 3:

As per the recommendations of the Indecon Review, the period for appointment of members to the Board of the IGB not exceeding two terms or six years, the Committee recommends that this provision must be adhered to immediately.

BORD NA gCON STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN FOLLOWING INDECON REVIEW (Section 3 refers)

Recommendation 4:

The Committee recommends that BnG should provide a detailed update on its progress toward achieving the financial targets which underpin its Strategic Business Plan (2003-2017) based on the recent policy changes made by BnG to implement the recommendations of the Indecon Review.

Recommendation 5:

The Committee recommends that the targeted growth of 4% in tote betting income as outlined in the C&AG report (2014) is essential and therefore must be strictly monitored.

Recommendation 6:

The Committee recommends that the returns of racing dog numbers from the year 2015 must be made available without delay to assist in the monitoring of the industry.

AN INDUSTRY-WIDE TRACK ASSESSMENT (Section 5.1 refers)

Recommendation 7:

As per the recommendations of the Indecon Review, BnG has reviewed the operational performance and plans for track improvement for all its racetracks. Assessing the commercial viability of the industry as a whole should be based, in the first instance, on the profitability of each component racetrack across the country. Therefore, the Committee recommends that the following should be considered to ensure that all BnG property is efficiently utilised:

That details of the review be published;

That multiannual localised action plans be compiled detailing specific measures to maximise the commercial viability of each track;

That an industry wide track assessment must be conducted to establish how many individual greyhounds raced annually to assist in monitoring the number of racing dogs in the industry.

MONITORING OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INDECON REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS (Section 5.1 refers)

Recommendation 8:

The Committee recommends that a reoccurring examination of BnG's implementation of the Indecon Review's recommendations is merited (in the form of scrutiny of BnG's appraisal 'tracker' reports of its implementation plan) and if possible, meetings between the Committee and industry representatives /stakeholders should be facilitated to comment on its implementation.

ESTABLISHMENT OF A CONSULTATIVE / ADVISORY FORUM OR GROUP (Section 5.2 refers)

Recommendation 9:

Bord na gCon has an important role in coordinating industry stakeholders and ensuring coherence in terms of the strategic direction of the industry as well as leading by example in terms of accountability, openness and transparency. Therefore, the Committee recommends that the establishment of a formal Consultative Forum to include Departmental officials, representatives from BnG and the IGOBF and other stakeholders, as deemed by the Minister should be established, possibly modelled on the Racegoers' Consultative Forum, (a statutory committee of Horse Racing Ireland). Such a Forum may hold a recommendation-making function to convey its views to the board of BnG and meet on a quarterly basis to consider and react to industry developments and represent the views and interests of all industry stakeholders.

ENHANCING GREYHOUND WELFARE (Section 5.3 refers)

Recommendation 10:

Ensuring the highest international standards of regulation and animal welfare is vital in protecting the reputation and the financial viability of the industry. Therefore, the Committee recommends the following should be considered:

- Given advancements in technology and monitoring systems, regularly updated, accurate records on all registered greyhounds in Ireland should be maintained in order for the industry and its stakeholders (as well as welfare authorities and officers) to identify and track the numbers of injured, traded (sold/exported), retired and deceased greyhounds in an open and transparent way. This may take the form of a single register whereby each greyhound whelped is microchipped and recorded on one central database by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine in collaboration with BnG and the Irish Coursing Club;
- That an improved traceability regime be established, to ensure that the actions of certain owners can be more effectively patrolled and that dogs can be traced throughout their lifespan;
- That the powers of the Welfare Committee of BnG be enhanced and extended and, if necessary, placed on a statutory footing to ensure full independence;
- More accountability should be sought from owners, including an onus to account (and report) regularly on the status of greyhounds in their possession;
- That data on greyhound welfare available to BnG, such as that on rehoming figures from the Retired Greyhound Trust, should be provided to recognised welfare and voluntary rescue groups or published publicly in a timely way;
- That the issue of abandonment of greyhounds be treated in legislation (if necessary) and for the rehoming / rescue of greyhounds should be actively encouraged in order to increase the percentage of greyhounds rescued annually (from local authority pounds and elsewhere) from 38% in 2014 and to reduce the numbers of racing dogs euthanised annually (57% of those admitted to local authority pounds in 2014). This may take the form of an additional funding provision from BnG to the Retired Greyhound Trust to aid its work in finding homes for retired dogs (as recommended in the Indecon Review – see **Appendix 4**, recommendation #24);
- That the sanctioning regime be clarified and strengthened and that authorised officers (i.e. the Area Stipendiary Stewards) take an increasingly proactive approach in order to deter abuse and prevent cruelty to greyhounds and to encourage accurate and timely reporting;
- That more stringent penalties to tackle certain offences such as owners who fail to transfer ownership when they give away or sell a registered greyhound;
- That a person found guilty of serious and on-going cruelty within the industry should receive a lifetime ban.

Recommendation 11:

The Committee recommends that the ongoing issues concerning the breeding of greyhounds with dogs deceased for two years or more, registered in the stud book by the ICC, must be addressed immediately.

RING-FENCING OF PRIZE MONEY (Section 5.4 refers)

Recommendation 12:

The level of prize money directly impacts the viability of the industry. Therefore, the Committee recommends that the Minister should instruct BnG of any additional funds provided by the exchequer for prize money should be ring-fenced. Any unused prize money should be returned to the exchequer and not used for debt servicing or for other operational or marketing purposes. This should be reported to the relevant Oireachtas Committee on an annual basis.

DRUGS IN GREYHOUND RACING (Section 5.5 refers)

Recommendation 13:

The Committee recommends that a zero tolerance policy is vital on the issue of prohibited substances in greyhound racing. Therefore, a stringent adherence to best practice international standards is highly recommended to protect and develop the industry for future generations as highlighted in the Morris Report and must be expedited.

1. Industry background

Brief history

Greyhound racing was first introduced on the island of Ireland in April 1927² when the first greyhound track was opened in Celtic Park in Belfast. Later that year, the Shelbourne Park racetrack in Dublin was opened and followed by the opening of tracks at Harold's Cross (Dublin) and Dunmore Stadium (Belfast). The track at the Showgrounds (Cork) was opened in 1928³ but was closed and replaced by a track at Western Road (Cork) in 1935-6. Racing was first introduced to Limerick in 1932 at the Markets Field stadium with the first race held in 1937.⁴ Tracks were also opened in other towns and cities across Ireland during this period including Dundalk (1930), Tralee (1930), Clonmel (1931), Mullingar (1932), Enniscorthy (1933) and Galway (1934).⁵ The first Irish Greyhound Derby was first held at Harold's Cross in 1928.

An economic and social overview

The greyhound racing industry is estimated to be worth approximately €500⁶ million annually to the Irish economy. The industry employs approximately 10,300 people⁷ directly and indirectly through supporting / ancillary businesses. Employment is spread across the country and across various areas including:⁸

- Catering at greyhound race tracks;
- Staff employed at tracks owned by BnG;
- Staff employed at privately owned tracks;
- Staff employed in cleaning and security services at all racetracks / stadia;
- Food and drink suppliers to catering operators;
- Private and public trainers;
- Greyhound food manufacturers and suppliers;
- Ancillary services such as veterinary and medicine, dog owners, betting offices and a number of miscellaneous areas.

Between 2002 and 2010, 18,211 greyhound meetings were held across Ireland, attended by 10.25 million people.⁹

Tracks and racecourses / stadia / recent infrastructural development

² Teagasc (2006) [Greyhounds](#). Factsheet No. 58, May 2006.

³ See www.greyhound-data.com/stadia.htm

⁴ Limerick Leader (2010) '[End of an era arrives for the Markets Field](#)', 14 July 2010 and Limerick Enterprise Development Partnership (2015) [The Markets Field: Past, Present and Future](#).

⁵ A complete history of Irish tracks is available on the greyhound racing history website [here](#).

⁶ Note these figures are from 2009 and are derived from Power (2011) *The Economic and Financial Significance of the Irish Greyhound Industry in Ireland*, April 2011.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Response to the [Parliamentary Question no. 121](#) of 25 June 2015 [24649/15] by the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Simon Coveney T.D.

⁹ Power (2011) [The Economic and Financial Significance of the Irish Greyhound Industry in Ireland](#), April 2011.

There are 17 greyhound stadia / racetracks in Ireland. Of these, BnG has at least some involvement (ownership/management) in 11, while six are privately owned and operated. All greyhound stadia / racetracks are licenced by BnG.

Table 1: Stadia / racetracks in Ireland

Position		Location	
BnG involvement (11)	Owned and managed (8)	Cork	Galway
		Cork (Youghal)	Limerick ¹⁰
		Dublin (Shelbourne Park)	Tralee
		Dublin (Harold's Cross)	Waterford
	Owned but privately managed (1)	Clonmel ¹¹	
	Part-owned (1)	Mullingar ¹²	
	Managed (1)	Newbridge (since March 2013)	
Privately owned (6)		Dundalk	Lifford (Donegal)
		Enniscorthy	Longford
		Kilkenny	Thurles

Source: C&AG (2014)¹³

Figure 1: Location of greyhound stadia, by type



Source: C&AG (2014)¹⁴

¹⁰ The Old Markets Field stadium (Limerick) was sold for €1.5m in 2011. The new stadium opened in October 2010.

¹¹ Bord na gCon has leased the stadium to Davis Road Greyhound Stadium Plc.

¹² Bord na gCon holds a 51% share in the Mullingar Stadium.

¹³ Comptroller and Auditor General (2014) [Development of Limerick Greyhound Racing Stadium](#). Special Report no. 86, August 2014.

¹⁴ Comptroller and Auditor General (2014) [Development of Limerick Greyhound Racing Stadium](#). Special Report no. 86, August 2014.

Recommendation 1:

The figures (approximately 10,000 people employed in an industry worth an estimated €500m) cited by the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine in recent responses to Parliamentary Questions ([June 2015](#) and [July 2015](#)) are based on the April 2011 Jim Power report '*The Economic and Financial Significance of the Irish Greyhound Industry in Ireland*' commissioned by BnG. The Power report itself uses 2009 figures. The Committee recommends that a compilation of an up-to-date economic assessment of the industry including a full breakdown of staff working in all category levels (both public and private) in the industry should be considered in order to more accurately reflect the current state of the industry in Ireland

2. Governance and administration

2.1 Role of Statutory Boards / Governing Bodies

The following is a summary of the key stakeholders in the greyhound racing industry and their respective remits:

Bord na gCon / Irish Greyhound Board

BnG is a statutory, commercial semi-state body established under the *Greyhound Industry Act, 1958* with the objective of regulating, improving and developing the greyhound racing industry. BnG has broad and autonomous powers to regulate all aspects of greyhound racing, from the licencing of stadia to the issuing of permits to officials, bookmakers and trainers.¹⁵ However, BnG has no role in registering greyhounds in the studbook (this is a function of the ICC). BnG employs more than 700 full and part-time staff and has an annual turnover of approximately €40m (2013).¹⁶ There are nine permanent committees established by BnG under the *1958 Act* (as of late-2013) as follows: Control Committee, Control Appeal Committee, Audit Committee, Ownership Committee, Remuneration Committee, RGT, Sales Committee, Wagering Committee and the Welfare Committee. A Scientific Committee has also been recently established to focus on doping and medication control in greyhounds.

The mission statement of BnG is as follows:¹⁷

“To deliver a commercial, well-regulated Greyhound Racing and Breeding Industry whilst enabling the delivery of a customer centred, highly exciting and value led entertainment experience.”

BnG operates its racing track facilities through 11 subsidiary companies; nine being wholly owned by BnG, one being the Mullingar track (in which it holds a 51% share) and the other being a property holding company.¹⁸ Each subsidiary company has its own board members and chairperson. BnG operated under the aegis of the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism from 2002 until May 2010 when responsibility transferred to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

BnG published its Strategic Business Plan Report in September 2013¹⁹ which it considers a blueprint for developing the industry into one which is globally competitive and sustainable. According to the Strategic Business Plan, the industry faces a number of challenges as follows:

- Fewer people are attending races and attendees are spending less;

¹⁵ Bord na gCon (2014) [Annual Report – 2013](#), December 2014.

¹⁶ According to the Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Tom Hayes T.D., in his opening statement to the Joint Committee in October 2015.

¹⁷ Bord na gCon (2013) [Strategic Business Plan Report](#), September 2013.

¹⁸ C&AG (2014) [Development of Limerick Greyhound Racing Stadium – Special Report #86](#), August 2014.

¹⁹ Bord na gCon (2013) [Strategic Business Plan Report](#), September 2013.

- The age profile of the core attendance is becoming older with a strong imperative to attract the younger generation;
- Revenue has reduced due to the proliferation of alternative attractions;
- There has been an emergence of 'sports' wagering rather than traditional race wagering;
- The UK greyhound industry has declined with direct impacts on the Irish industry.

To achieve its stated objective, the Strategic Business Plan identified a number of revenue and organisational initiatives at BnG which will improve revenue to the company and in the industry as a whole. These are summarised in the Table below:

Table 2: Revenue and organisational initiatives (BnG Strategic Business Plan 2013-2017)

Revenue initiatives	Organisational initiatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish Irish greyhound racing has having the most rigorous and effective regulatory code in the wagering industry; ▪ With this new improved Regulatory code in place increase revenue earned from off-stadium betting in Ireland and internationally; ▪ Stream racing events to selected international locations; ▪ Continue to develop the classic race meetings (referred to as 'Gold Star' meetings) into major entertainment events with top music groups, excellent catering, celebrity attendance and promotional packages. This approach has already shown to increase attendance at major events; ▪ Negotiate greater media coverage; ▪ Obtain greater income from sponsorship for 'Gold Star' and local meetings; ▪ Build higher attendance through improved marketing including the use of social media; and ▪ Increase income from the Tote through new and more aggressive offers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Appoint an executive team reporting to the CEO with accountability for implementing the Strategic Business Plan. The five member executive team will each have the title 'Director of Function', e.g., Director of Wagering & Tote; ▪ Improve structures across the BnG organisation so that the strategic initiatives can be delivered and there is role clarity for all employees; and ▪ Maintain the drive to further improve efficiency and reduce costs.

Source: BnG (2013) [Strategic Business Plan Report](#), September 2013, p.7.

Among other things, a new executive structure was proposed under the Strategic Plan whereby the number of direct reports to the Chief Executive Officer would be reduced from 16 to 5, with the head of HR and the internal auditor also reporting to the CEO. Under the *Greyhound Industry Act, 1958* (Section 7), the main board of BnG comprises 7 Members, all appointed by the Minister.

The IGOBF is a representative group for greyhound owners who, according to the Federation, “are by far the largest investors in the Irish greyhound industry... [investing]...€244m per annum”. The primary objectives of the Federation are:²⁰

1. “To co-ordinate the efforts of all Associations, to safeguard the rights of the members and to promote their best interests in so far as they relate to the breeding, rearing, maintaining, training, racing, coursing and selling of greyhounds;
2. To make effective representation and contributions to BnG, the ICC, and to the Minister with responsibility for the Irish greyhound industry;
3. To ensure the BnG, Boards of Directors, Track Management, and the ICC do not act to the detriment of the members of GOBAs [Regional Greyhound Owners and Breeders Association].”

There are eight regional associations affiliated with the Federation (known as Greyhound Owners and Breeder’s Associations or GOBAs) representing approximately 7,000 members. The IGOBF is included in the register of nominating bodies under the *Seanad Electoral (Panel Members) Acts, 1942-72*.

The Irish Coursing Club (ICC)

The ICC manages and regulates coursing²¹ in Ireland and comprises 89 affiliated clubs from Ireland and Northern Ireland. The ICC regulates coursing in Ireland under an annually-renewed licence from the Minister of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. The ICC is also responsible for the identification and registration of greyhounds in the Irish Greyhound Studbook, the official registry. The organisation is subject to the general control and direction of BnG under Section 26(2) of the *Greyhound Industry Act, 1958*.²² Unlike BnG, the ICC is not a semi-State body and does not receive support from the HGRF.

Greyhound Rescue Association of Ireland (GRAI)

The GRAI is an association of Irish animal rescue organisations and individuals dedicated to promoting greyhounds as pets and acting as advocates for the breed in Ireland. The GRAI promotes best practices in greyhound welfare. Member organisations of the GRAI are involved with the rescue, rehabilitation and rehoming of abuse and abandoned greyhounds.²³ In relation to racing greyhounds, the GRAI states the following:

“Today Ireland produces and exports more greyhounds than any other country in the world, and every decision in an Irish greyhound’s life is conditioned by economics. Greyhounds are treated as disposable commodities. Each year thousands of Irish greyhounds retire from racing. While a few live out happy retirements, many thousands are cruelly abandoned or destroyed at the end of their racing careers.

ISPCA

²⁰ Irish Greyhound Owners and Breeders Federation (IGOBF) [website](#).

²¹ Coursing is defined as the sport of hunting game animals such as hares with greyhounds using sight rather than scent.

²² See: Response to Dáil Éireann [Parliamentary Question No. 464](#) of 9 June 2015 [21962/15].

²³ See: <http://grai.ie/about-grai/>

The ISPCA is Ireland's national animal welfare organisation and a member of the International Greyhound Forum. While the direct role of the ISPCA in the greyhound industry is limited, it has a significant role in relation to unwanted, former racing dogs which have entered local authority dog pounds. Since May 2014, under Section 74 of the *Animal Health and Welfare Act 2013*, the IPSCA may carry out an inspection function. However, the ISPCA does not exercise an inspection function in relation to "a greyhound racing establishment operated by BnG or a greyhound breeding establishment within the meaning of the *Welfare of Greyhounds Act, 2011*".

The Retired Greyhound Trust (RGT)

The RGT was established in January 1997 with charitable status to promote the rehoming of retired racing greyhounds as pets. RGT is a permanent committee of BnG established under the *Greyhound Industry Act, 1958*. It has two primary aims:

- To apply its funds for the relief of suffering and distress of greyhounds retired from racing in Ireland; and in particular;
- To rescue and provide care and shelter for retired, stray neglected or unwanted greyhounds, and to find suitable homes for any such animals (through collaboration with rehoming agencies across Europe).

RGT receives partial funding from BnG (€51,193 in 2013) and BnG hosts information on adopting greyhounds on its website. An average of 30 greyhounds per month went on the RGT rehoming list in 2012 and 2013.

2.2 Legislative overview (current and proposed)

BnG was established in 1958 under the [Greyhound Industry Act 1958](#) to control greyhound racing and improve and development the greyhound racing industry in Ireland. The [Greyhound Industry \(Amendment\) Act 1993](#) made a number of minor amendments to the 1958 Act and at the time of its introduction a more comprehensive bill was promised 'as soon as possible'. The 1993 Act, among other things, removed the requirement that three Board members be members of the ICC and reduced from five to three years the term of office for Board members. There were also changes made to the practise of coursing including the requirement for dogs to be muzzled.

Racing is specifically governed by [Greyhound Industry \(Racing\) Regulations 2007](#) and [Greyhound Industry \(Control Committee and Control Appeal Committee\) Regulations 2007](#) which replaced the earlier [Greyhound Race Track \(Racing\) Regulations 1993](#). These regulations included some of the recommendations from the Dalton Report in respect of doping (see [Dalton Report](#), pgs. 27-47).

Box 1: The Dalton Report

In February 2006 the then Minister for Arts Sports and Tourism, John O'Donoghue appointed Tim Dalton (former Secretary General of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform) to inquire into corporate governance practices and procedures for dealing with doping infringements at BnG following specific public controversy. The Report, entitled [*Report on Certain Matters Affecting BnG*](#) and published in June 2006, recommended a number of corporate governance changes including that the roles of Board Members need to be clarified, that a performance management system should be introduced and other changes relating to the appointment of Board Members and duration of membership. The Report also recommended a number of procedures to tackle doping in the industry including testing, the banning of additional substances, the creation of an appeals mechanism and stated penalties for contravening the *1958 Act*.

In response to the Dalton Report, BnG announced a new administrative system for doping control including an independent control committee to investigate and sanction those involved.

The Control Committee is now comprised of five people not on the Board or involved with greyhound racing and must include a vet and a practising barrister or solicitor. A Control Appeal Committee was also established comprised of three people independent of the Board and industry at least one of which must be a vet and another must be a practising barrister or solicitor.

The [*Welfare of Greyhounds Act, 2011*](#) provides for the regulation of the operation of greyhound breeding to be optimised and established a register of greyhound breeding establishments.

Horse Racing Ireland Act, 2015

This Bill amends and extends the *Irish Horseracing Industry Act 1994* and the *Horse and Greyhound Racing Act 2001*. The Bill proposes, among other things, that the Minister (for Agriculture, Food and the Marine) will have the authority to determine the number and amount of instalments payable to HRI and BnG “following assessment of the financial needs of HRI and BnG and in the event that the financial needs of either body alter significantly the Minister may alter the number and amount of the instalments”. Section 15 (c) also allows the Minister to withhold any or all instalments or part of an instalment to either HRI or BnG where certain concerns arise.

Government support for the horse and greyhound racing industries is provided under the HGRF (established under section 12 of the *Horse and Greyhound Racing Act, 2001*). In accordance with the Act, 80% and 20% of the monies paid into the Fund each year are distributed between HRI and BnG, respectively. The amounts provided under this measure are approved by both Houses of the Oireachtas on an annual basis. In 2013 and 2014, amounts of €44,016,000 and €43,376,000 respectively were paid from the Fund to HRI.²⁴

²⁴ Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine (Simon Coveney T.D.), [Written Answers Nos. 161-167](#) of 29 January 2014.

The Bill was presented to Dáil Éireann on 1 October 2015²⁵ and has since completed all stages. The Bill is currently with the Seanad at the time of publication.

Greyhound Industry (Amendment) Bill [Proposed]

A *Greyhound Industry (Amendment) Bill* is proposed. The Bill will amend and extend the *Greyhound Industry Act, 1958* and the *Welfare of Greyhounds Act 2011*. The expected publication date is 2016.²⁶

It is expected that the Bill will treat a number of issues identified in the Indecon Review of Certain Matters into BnG published in July 2014, primarily in relation to industry regulation and greyhound welfare. A number of issues highlighted in the Review are, according to BnG²⁷, subject to enactment of legislation, as follows:

- Facilitating the access by the statutory independent Greyhound Racing Control Committee and Control Appeal Committee to scientific and legal expertise;
- Facilitate the staggered appointments to which Committees; and
- Allow BnG and the ICC to independently serve exclusion and disqualification orders;

Appendix 2 provides a summary of the existing legislation related to the greyhound racing industry.

Recommendation 2:

The Committee recommends that the integrity of the Control Committee must be maintained and made accountable to the relevant Oireachtas Committee.

Recommendation 3:

As per the recommendations of the Indecon Review, the period for appointment of members to the Board of the IGB not exceeding two terms or six years, the Committee recommends that this provision must be adhered to immediately.

²⁵ See: <http://www.oireachtas.ie/viewdoc.asp?fn=/documents/bills28/bills/2015/8315/document1.htm>

²⁶ According to the Government's [Autumn 2015 Legislative Programme](#).

²⁷ Bord na gCon (2014) [Irish Greyhound Board response to Indecon Report of Certain Matters Relating to Bord na gCon – Appendix 4](#), October 2014.

3. Funding

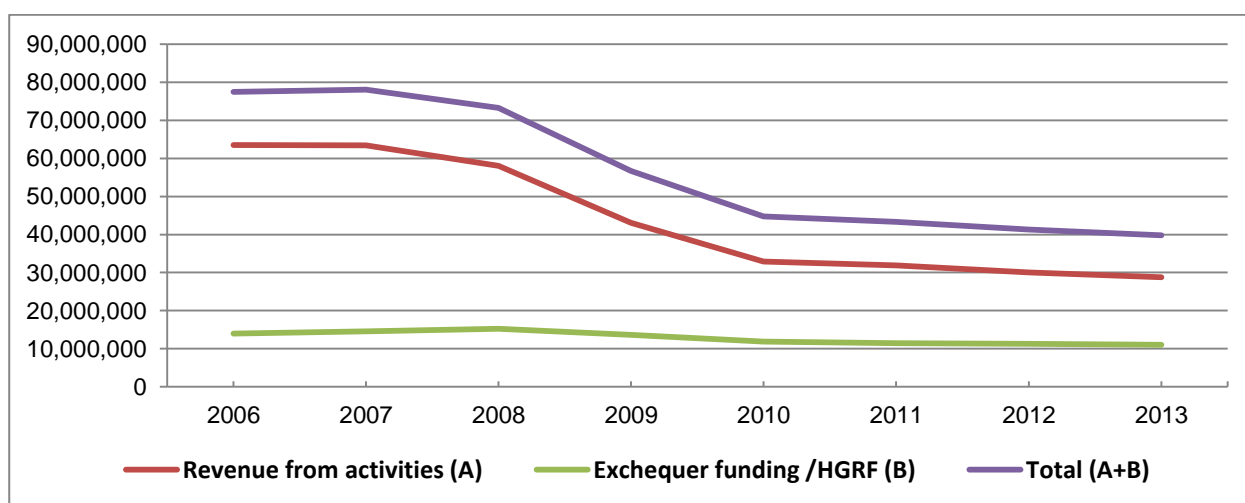
Funding for BnG comes from a variety of sources, including the following:

- Stadia / racetrack admission fees;
- Concession fees from restaurant facilities;
- A percentage deduction from totalisator (tote) pools;
- A turnover charge on on-course bookmaker betting; and
- Exchequer funding (allocation from the Horse and Greyhound Fund).

Over the past decade, total income peaked at €78m (2007) but fell to €39.8m in 2013, a fall of approximately 49%. This is mainly driven by a sharp fall in daily activity revenue from €63.4m (2007) to €28.8m (2013), a fall of 55%. Exchequer income, from the HGRF, fell 19.7% over the same period (see **Appendix 1**).

Funding for the industry (i.e. BnG) comes from income generated by racing facilities and by an Exchequer subvention through the HGRF which was established under the *Horse and Greyhound Racing Act 2001*.²⁸ The Fund was set up to aid the development of both industries and to facilitate investment in necessary infrastructure and provide for increased prize money while also compensating for the loss of income arising from the abolition of the on-course bookmaker levy.²⁹ There is an 80/20 split between the horse and greyhound industry respectively. Proportionally, income from the Horse and Greyhound Fund has risen as a share of total income from 17.9% (2005) to 27.7% (2013) though the nominal amount over the same period as fallen from €13.7m (2005) to €11m (2013).

Chart 1: Financial performance of Bord na gCon (2005-2013) - €



Source: BnG [Annual Reports \(2005-2013\)](#)

²⁸ Enacted in July 2001.

²⁹ As specified in the BnG 2001 Annual Report, p. 3.

Table 3: The Horse and Greyhound Racing Fund (Greyhound industry) - Bord na gCon

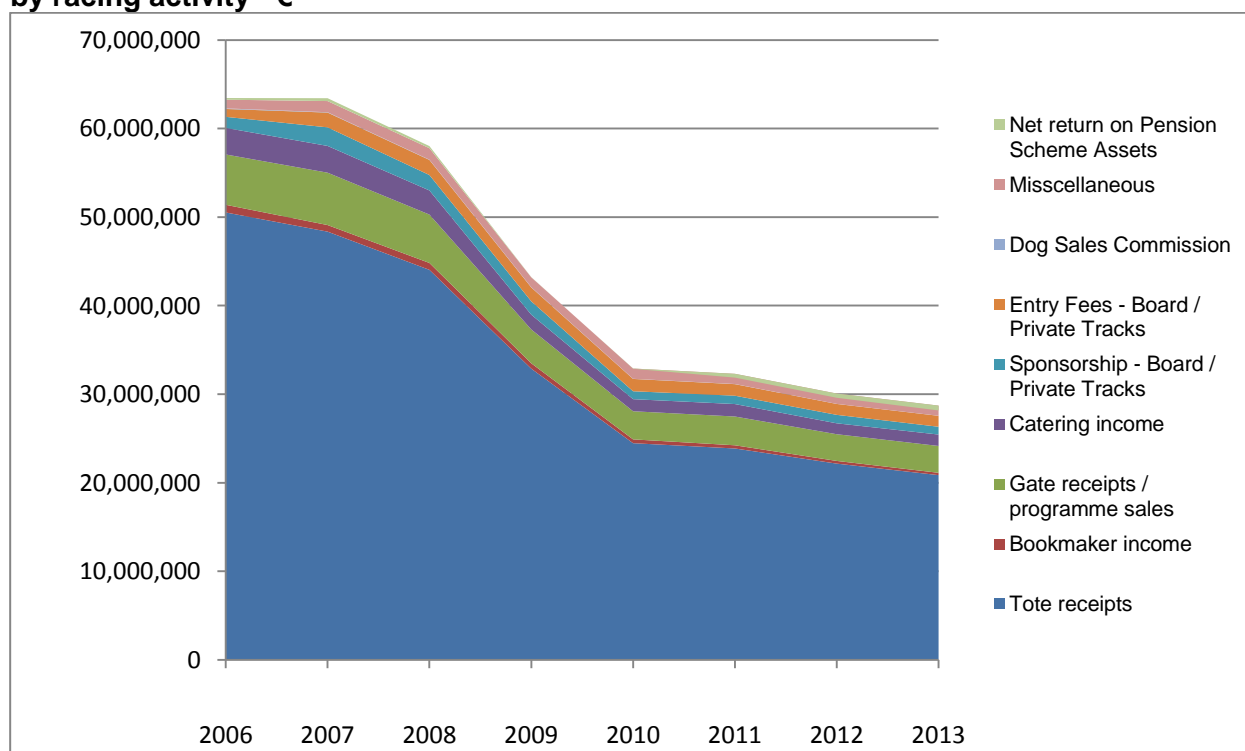
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
	€m								
Revenue from activities (A)	62.6	63.4	63.4	58.0	43.0	32.9	31.8	30.0	28.8
Exchequer funding /HGRF (B)	13.7	14.0	14.5	15.3	13.6	11.8	11.5	11.3	11.0
Total (A+B)	76.3	77.4	78.0	73.3	56.6	44.7	43.3	41.3	39.8
Exchequer funding /HGRF (€m)	13.7	14.0	14.5	15.3	13.6	11.8	11.4	11.3	11.0
Exchequer funding (% of total)	17.9	18.1	18.7	20.8	24.0	26.5	26.4	27.3	27.7

Source: BnG [Annual Reports \(2005-2013\)](#) and Indecon (2014) [Review of Certain Matters Relating to BnG](#), p.ii. See **Appendix 1** for a more detailed breakdown on nominal and proportional revenue (2006-2013)

Over the period 2001-2013, since the establishment of the Fund in 2001, BnG has received approximately €174.5m from the exchequer.³⁰ BnG received €10.4m from the Fund in 2014 and will receive €13.6m in 2015. Its forecast allocation (under Budget 2016) is €14.8m for 2016. This yields a forecast total of €213.3m over the period 2001-2016.

Proportionally, revenue from racing facilities has remained relatively constant since 2005/6. As illustrated overleaf (see also **Appendix 1**), tote receipts comprise the majority share of income but have slightly declined over time from 79.6% (2006) to 74.1% (2013). The share of income from bookmakers has increased from 9% (2006) to 10.6% (2013) while income from combined (private and Board owned) track entry fees has increased from 1.4% (2006) to 4.4% (2013).

Chart 2: Bord na gCon revenue from racing facilities only (2006-2013) by racing activity - €



Source: Indecon (2014) [Review of Certain Matters Relating to BnG](#), p.ii.

³⁰ Note the Fund was established under the *Horse and Greyhound Racing Fund Act, 2001* which was enacted in July 2001. The figure provided for 2001 in the BnG Annual Accounts refers to 'Oireachtas Grants' rather than to the Fund. However, the Annual Report states that due to the establishment of the Fund, €12.7m funding to the Board is "effectively guarantee[d]".

Financial implications of the Strategic Business Plan (2013-2017)

To counteract declining revenue from racing activities, the Board has set out a number of strategic financial objectives to grow revenue to 2017 and to substantially reduce bank borrowings (by €17m). The key assumptions underpinning the achievement of this borrowing target are:³¹

- Growth of 4% a year in tote betting income (all stadia);
- Significant growth in other income including new forms of income; and
- Growth of 6% in overall gate receipts (all stadia);

The specific Strategic forecasts and assumptions for BnG are as follows:

- Grow **total income** to €50.9m in 2017 (for comparison, 2013 income was €41.3m and 2014 income was €39.8m);
- Increase **tote turnover** to €28m by 2017 (for comparison, 2013 tote turnover was €20.8m);
- Increase **prize money** from €7.2m (17.4% of projected income) in 2012 to €9.4m (18.4% of projected income) in 2017;
- **Reduce overheads** over the period 2012-2017 to yield a surplus in 2017 of €2.4m;
- Continue to contribute €0.5m **annual pension contributions** over the period 2012-2017;
- The **allocation from the Horse & Greyhound Racing Fund** within the time period to 2017 will remain at €11.0m per annum.³²

In its meeting with the Committee (20 October 2015), BnG indicated that the “most significant” difference between the Strategic Plan (detailed above) and the Indecon Review is in relation to the pace of debt repayment. The Indecon Review envisages an accelerated pace of debt reduction (to €7m by end-2017) compared with the Strategic Plan (€17m by end-2017).

Recommendation 4:

The Committee recommends that BnG should provide a detailed update on its progress toward achieving the financial targets which underpin its Strategic Business Plan (2003-2017) based on the recent policy changes made by BnG to implement the recommendations of the Indecon Review.

³¹ C&AG (2014) '[Development of Limerick Greyhound Racing Stadium](#)', August 2014.

³² The Minister of State with responsibility for the Greyhound Industry at the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine has subsequently announced that funding to the industry from the Horse and Greyhound Racing Fund for 2016 will increase to €14.8m.

Recommendation 5:

The Committee recommends that the targeted growth of 4% in tote betting income as outlined in the C&AG report (2014) is essential and therefore must be strictly monitored.

Recommendation 6:

The Committee recommends that the returns of racing dog numbers from the year 2015 must be made available without delay to assist in the monitoring of the industry.

4. Regulation, animal welfare and rearing / breeding

Regulation

BnG is responsible for the regulation of the industry under the *Greyhound Racing Industry Act, 1958*. The regulatory powers have been amended by legislation and supplemented by a number of Statutory Instruments (SIs).

An executive position of Director of Racing Governance and Compliance within BnG was first filled in May 2014. This Director is responsible for ensuring that the existing regulatory and compliance system is fully observed by all participants in the industry and for developing an enhanced regulatory code to ensure the highest integrity of greyhound racing in Ireland. The two central bodies for regulation are the Control Committee and the Control Appeal Committee of BnG which are responsible for, among other things, decisions when positive tests for prohibited substances are identified in racing greyhounds.

The Indecon Review recommended a number of measures to strengthen regulatory processes and procedures, some of which has been implemented to date.³³ In particular, the Review highlighted the lack of information regarding the publication of adverse analytical findings in relation to testing of greyhounds for prohibited substances. The Review also referred to the need for the implementation of mandatory penalties such as disqualification of greyhounds following adverse testing results. From 1 October 2015³⁴ (under new statutory instruments), both recommendations were implemented as follows:

- From 1 October 2015, the **result of any adverse analytical tests** of a greyhound for prohibited substances will be **published** (following confirmation of the presence of banned substances and ahead of a hearing by the Greyhound industry's Control Committee) ([Greyhound Industry \(Control Committee and Control Appeal Committee\)\(Amendment\) Regulation, 2015](#)); and
- **Information relating to that greyhound will also be published** and the greyhound immediately **banned from racing** until a further a test is undertaken ([Greyhound Industry \(Racing\) \(Amendment\) \(No.2\) Regulations, 2015](#));

³³ For example, as detailed by the Minister for State, Tom Hayes T.D., in his presentation to the Joint Committee on 20 October 2015, from 1 October the results of any adverse analytical result from a greyhound tested for a prohibited substance will be published on the BnG website.

³⁴ Bord na gCon (2015) '[The Irish Greyhound Board \(IGB\) Has Announced a Major Strengthening of its Regulatory Controls to Enhance Integrity in Racing](#)', 22 September 2015.

BnG has also established a scientific Committee on doping and medication control to advise the board which will take into account the relevant recommendations of the Morris Report.³⁵

It is also proposed that mandatory sentences be applied for certain offences, however as indicated by BnG, this will likely entail primary legislation through the proposed *Greyhound Industry (Amendment) Bill*.

Animal welfare

As detailed in Section 2.1, both BnG and the ICC have regulatory responsibility for the greyhound industry. Incidents of greyhound cruelty are investigated by BnG and sanctions are recommended where an individual is found to be in breach of the *Welfare of Greyhounds Act, 2011*. The official registered owner is responsible for the welfare, action and whereabouts of their greyhounds however both the registered **owner** and the nominated **keeper** of the greyhound “shall both take full responsibility for the physical and social well-being of the greyhound” and shall do so “with full regard to its welfare”.³⁶

According to the Indecon Review (p. vii):

“Apart from compliance with the rules of racing, ensuring satisfactory greyhound welfare is an important objective for BnG. Concern has been expressed in submissions to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine about the welfare and fate of retiring greyhounds and the number of unwanted greyhounds.

BnG have a number of initiatives in place to support animal welfare. These include the attendance of veterinary surgeons at racing and sales trials. The Board also employs personnel to oversee greyhound welfare including a Welfare Manager and a Welfare Committee has been established.”

The Review recommended a series of measures including a strengthening and expansion of the existing sanctioning regime. As such, a *Greyhound Industry (Amendment) Bill* is proposed. The Bill will amend and extend the *Greyhound Industry Act, 1958* and the *Welfare of Greyhounds Act 2011*. The expected publication date is 2016.³⁷ It is expected that the Bill will treat a number of issues identified in the Indecon Review of Certain Matters into BnG published in July 2014, primarily in relation to industry regulation and greyhound welfare. A number of issues highlighted in the Review are, according to BnG,³⁸ subject to enactment of legislation, as follows:

- Facilitating the access by the statutory independent Greyhound Racing Control Committee and Control Appeal Committee to scientific and legal expertise;

³⁵ Bord na gCon has commissioned Professor Tim Morris, an independent scientific advisor to the Greyhound Board of Britain, to report on integrity and control systems in the industry, specifically related to anti-doping and medication procedures.

³⁶ Bord na gCon (2011) [Irish Greyhound Board – Code of Practice in the Care & Welfare of the Greyhound](#).

³⁷ According to the Government's [Autumn 2015 Legislative Programme](#).

³⁸ Bord na gCon (2014) [Irish Greyhound Board response to Indecon Report of Certain Matters Relating to Bord na gCon](#) – Appendix 3, October 2014.

- Facilitate the staggered appointments to Committees; and
- Allow BnG and the ICC to independently serve exclusion and disqualification orders;

Rearing / breeding

In addition to animal welfare issues, the Review also noted that an issue for the sector is “to ensure sufficient number of active owners and an active breeding sector” as a minimum number of registered greyhounds is required to maintain a viable industry in Ireland. The Review found that the numbers of greyhounds registered in Ireland have declined significantly since 2004. In absolute terms there are just over 8,000 fewer registered and named greyhounds in 2013 than in 2006, a fall of 34%. All indicators show significant declines, as follows:

- **Active owners:** 42.6% decrease from 2007 to 2013;
- **No. of greyhounds mated:** 34% decrease from 2006 to 2013;
- **No. of greyhound litters:** 36.6% decrease from 2006 to 2013;

A number of recommended measures relating to the areas of regulation, animal welfare and breeding were included in the Indecon Review, commissioned by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and published in July 2014. A summary of the recommendations of the Indecon Review is supplied in **Appendix 4**.

5. Stakeholder hearings

The following is a thematic summary of the main arguments put forward at the public hearing and in written submissions by stakeholders and the corresponding Recommendations identified by the Committee.

5.1 Sale of Harold's Cross racetrack / stadium

The Indecon Review recommends the sale of, among other things, Harold's Cross racetrack in Dublin in order to improve the legacy debt position and commercial viability of BnG.

The Minister of State highlighted that no alternative to the sale of the track at Harold's Cross has been presented to him and that the debt at €22 million "is not sustainable in to the future". He indicated that BnG is working on obtaining planning permission to enhance the value of the property in order to maximise the realisable sale price and (by extension) the level of debt which can be paid down. Comparing the situation with the horse racing industry, the Minister of State highlighted that where once there was three racecourses in the Dublin region, today there is only one and concluded that "there is an argument for going with that model and doing the same thing with Shelbourne Park" (which would become the only greyhound stadium in Dublin).

BnG has previously indicated a commitment to selling the stadium³⁹ and stated that it is profitable "to the tune of €200,000 in 2013" and that the "reality of the situation the [BnG] is in is that its debts are far greater than any continued operation of Harold's Cross would realise, assuming we can dispose of the asset with full zoning". At that time (November 2014), BnG stated that a detailed plan had not yet been submitted to the Department but that a general plan including indicative timelines was submitted. In its meeting with the Committee (20 October 2015), BnG stated that it had looked at alternatives, but that these are very limited. The BnG detailed a number of reasons for this, as follows:

- BnG may only sell tracks owned by the Board which rules out one of the tracks in Cork;
- The two Dublin tracks are "within 2.5 kilometres of one another" and so "one has to close for the other to [remain] open" as "it is not the case that both tracks are simultaneously operating and making a profit";
- The decision to sell is not just based on financial performance as the impact of taking a track out of commission is also assessed (in terms of dog pools, performance etc.).

³⁹ According to evidence provided by BnG in a [meeting](#) with the Committee of Public Accounts on 27 November 2014.

- There is an “imperative need” to reduce the debt to a sustainable level quickly. The Indecon Review recommends an accelerated plan for repayment of debt (to be reduced to €7m by 2017, from €22m, i.e. by €15m);⁴⁰
- The sale would significantly reduce the interest due each year and free up cash flow which can then be put back into the industry in terms of capital investment which has been stalled for a number of years;

The IGOBF criticised the potential sale stating that would not solve the existing problems in the wider industry as most tracks are loss-making (with the notable exception of Shelbourne Park, Dublin and Harold’s Cross, Dublin). As such, the Federation stated it did not support selling a profitable track with potential for further development. In other evidence, the Federation stated that the track is performing well in 2015 so far (+22% in Quarter 1) and that it represents the only “Dublin owner’s track” where a lower class of greyhounds can compete. The Federation recommended a thorough assessment be conducted to establish the current position of all racetracks in Ireland.

The Indecon Review recommended that poorly performing racetracks be reviewed (recommendation #8). A review of “operational performance and plans for track improvement” was also included as a key deliverable by BnG and was classified as “implemented” according to an October 2015 update.⁴¹ Furthermore, BnG stated that, at least based solely on tote receipts, “...almost all tracks are profitable”.

Recommendation 7:

As per the recommendations of the Indecon Review, BnG has reviewed the operational performance and plans for track improvement for all its racetracks. Assessing the commercial viability of the industry as a whole should be based, in the first instance, on the profitability of each component racetrack across the country. Therefore, the Committee recommends that the following should be considered to ensure that all BnG property is efficiently utilised:

- That details of the review be published;
- That multiannual localised action plans be compiled detailing specific measures to maximise the commercial viability of each track;
- That an industry wide track assessment must be conducted to establish how many individual greyhounds raced annually to assist in monitoring the number of racing dogs in the industry.

⁴⁰ Notably, BnG CEO Geraldine Larkin referred to the issue as the “more long-term” disposal of Harold’s Cross stadium.

⁴¹ Bord na gCon (2015) *IGB response to recommendations made in the Indecon Report*, 16 October 2015 (material provided to the Joint Committee).

Recommendation 8:

The Committee recommends that a reoccurring examination of BnG's implementation of the Indecon Review's recommendations is merited (in the form of scrutiny of BnG's appraisal 'tracker' reports of its implementation plan) and if possible, meetings between the Committee and industry representatives /stakeholders should be facilitated to comment on its implementation.

5.2 Stakeholder communications

Communications between BnG and the Irish Greyhounds Owners and Breeders Federation (IGOBF) in particular was raised as a concern by a number of Committee Members. The IGOBF has been highly critical of the Board and its operations in key and reiterated this in published press releases and in the Committee meeting, primarily in relation to the issue of communications (generally) and what it perceives to be a lack of consultation.

The Minister of State acknowledged that the industry (i.e. the stakeholders) is very divided. Furthermore, he stated that communicating and consulting with the IGOBF "has occupied a huge amount of time for me" and stated that a united voice for the industry is his preference to ensure a coherent voice and structure. For example, BnG, referring to the sale of Harold's Cross stadium stated that it would discuss transitional issues surrounding the sale with the Dublin Greyhound Owners and Breeders Association (GOBA) and did not refer to the Federation in this regard.

The IGOBF stated it was in favour of consolidation and would support the creation of a unified organisation representing the owners and breeders. However, the Federation highlighted a problem whereby it meets with the CEO of BnG rather than the board as a whole.

BnG rejected the IGOBF's contention and stated that it was "amazed" at the perception of lack of communication. The Chairman stated that he has not turned down any meeting requests and that he is open to communication and is "fully supportive" of owners, breeders and greyhound representatives as, BnG believes, "we will never have a true greyhound industry until we have all members working together". However, BnG (in agreement with the Minister of State) described the industry as "hugely fragmented" and noted that following a public consultation on an incentive scheme to grow and develop ownership and greyhound pools, the IGOBF did not provide a submission. BnG stated that the problem may rest in a lack of agreement from all stakeholders in relation to the industry direction.

Recommendation 9:

BnG has an important role in coordinating industry stakeholders and ensuring coherence in terms of the strategic direction of the industry as well as leading by example in terms of accountability, openness and transparency. Therefore, the Committee recommends that the establishment of a formal Consultative Forum to include Departmental officials, representatives from BnG and the IGOBF and other stakeholders, as deemed by the Minister should be established, possibly modelled on the Racegoers' Consultative Forum, (a statutory committee of Horse Racing Ireland). Such a Forum may hold a recommendation-making function to convey its views to the board of BnG and meet on a quarterly basis to consider and react to industry developments and represent the views and interests of all industry stakeholders.

5.3 Regulation of the industry and animal welfare

The Department (through the Minister of State) stated that it is the Government's intention to enhance the existing **regulatory regime** in the greyhound industry by doing the following:

- Provide for Members of the independent Control Committee to be appointed by the Minister of the day;
- Facilitate explicit provision for penalties; and
- Address the question of mandatory sanctions;

This is in addition to changes which will be implemented under the [Horse Racing Ireland Bill 2015](#) to provide for the appointment of persons as authorised officers under the animal remedies legislation and recent secondary legislation on the publication of adverse analytical testing results and the banning of greyhounds.

The Minister also stated that BnG has commissioned Professor Tim Morris, an independent scientific advisor to the Greyhound Board of Britain to report on integrity and control systems in the industry, specifically related to anti-doping and medication procedures. The Minister furthermore stated that developing a strong welfare culture “must be a top priority and the strongest action must be taken against those who would threaten the reputation of this sector by failing to look after their dogs properly”. As stated by the Minister, the *Welfare of Greyhounds Act, 2011* provides a robust legal framework for all the necessary action.

The IGOBF rejected the premise that the Control Committee is independent and “it is not mentioned in the legislation and it is BnG who pays the members”.

A number of stakeholders expressed specific concerns over the **coursing and welfare aspects** of the industry. The Welfare Members of the International Greyhound Forum stated that while it is not calling for a ban on greyhound racing, it believes that certain issues need addressing, namely:

- The funding allocation from BnG to the RGT which it claims is down to €51,193 in 2013 from €131,763 in 2013, a reduction of 61%;

- The lack of record keeping for retired greyhounds and lack of accurate figures relating to racing greyhounds generally;
- The lack of regular reporting in relation to injury statistics and the number of greyhounds traded overseas;
- The lack of exclusion orders or disqualification orders (from the Stud Book) issued owing to reports of greyhound cruelty.

The Forum did note however that a Welfare and Racing Supports Manager reports to the Head of Regulation of BnG and is assisted in his duties by Area Stipendiary Stewards who may (if called upon) conduct inspections of kennels, investigations of stray greyhounds and deal with other welfare-related incidents.

These concerns were also raised by a number of other stakeholders. The Orchard Greyhound Sanctuary (Dr. MJ Fox)⁴² stated that, considering the large numbers of greyhounds required to sustain the industry, appropriate levels of funding from the HGRF should be allocated to the RGT (“...budget of approximately €200,000 needs to increase by five to ten times its current amount”) and that BnG needs to work with the other voluntary rescue groups and offer support. The Sanctuary also recommended that a special fund be set up by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine to support greyhound rescues and related organisations that support unwanted greyhounds. The issue of unwanted greyhounds was also raised by the ISCPA⁴³ which recommended that increased penalties be imposed for breaches of the *Welfare of Greyhounds Act, 2011* particular for owners who fail to transfer ownership when they give away or sell a greyhound. The issue of abandonment of greyhounds was also raised by the ICC which recommended that the *Welfare of Greyhounds Act, 2011* be amended to take account of this issue.

The ISPCA also acknowledged that while “significant inroads” have been made by BnG in recent years in terms of improving the welfare of dogs involved in racing and coursing, there remain issues regarding traceability (and therefore, accountability). Track management, traceability and the level of injuries was also raised by the GRAI which highlighted that in 2014, 717 injuries were reported arising from dogs skidding and crashing on the surface of inadequately maintained tracks. The GRAI also noted that 3-4 dogs are euthanised at each operational racing track every Saturday. In relation to traceability, the GRAI noted that the lifespan of a greyhound is 14 years on average, but the lifespan of a racing greyhound is 3 or 4

⁴² According to the submission of the Orchard Greyhound Sanctuary, Dr. Fox is currently the sole representative of the welfare community on Bord na gCon’s Welfare Committee. Dr. Fox was also active in the formation of the GRAI and was, until recently, a regular member of the International Greyhound Forum. Both the GRAI and the Forum provided written submissions to the Joint Committee to assist in its investigation of this topic.

⁴³ ISPCA inspectors do **not** exercise their inspection function in relation to a greyhound racing establishment operated by Bord na gCon or a greyhound breeding establishment within the meaning of the *Welfare of Greyhounds Act, 2011*.

years. Many of these dogs are either euthanised or end up in local authority pounds. As such, the GRAI states that “it is impossible to place a concrete figure on the number of Irish registered greyhounds currently living (or even actively racing) in Ireland”. The Association also noted that the unavailability of accurate numbers, combined with the “official ICC registration procedure which allows for a greyhound to be registered at any age” makes it impossible to make accurate industry calculations.

The capacity of the Welfare Committee of BnG was raised by the ICC and Orchard Greyhound Sanctuary (Dr. MJ Fox). Both organisations recommended that the Committee’s functions be expanded beyond recommendation-making and for additional (independent) powers be granted in order for it to respond quickly and effectively to prevailing concerns in the industry. The ICC⁴⁴ also recommended that the Committee itself be placed on a statutory footing.

The ICC also raised a number of concerns in relation to illegal hunting, conservation and repopulation of the Irish hare, and depopulation of the European brown hare. The ISPCA also stated that a ban on the coursing of live hares should be considered.

Collaboration between BnG and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine has yielded positive results, according to BnG which also restated its commitment to publishing data on the numbers of welfare inspections and penalties imposed on the welfare section within the resource centre on the BnG website and also in the Sporting Press on a regular basis.

Recommendation 10:

Ensuring the highest international standards of regulation and animal welfare is vital in protecting the reputation and the financial viability of the industry. Therefore, the Committee recommends the following should be considered:

- Given advancements in technology and monitoring systems, regularly updated, accurate records on all registered greyhounds in Ireland should be maintained in order for the industry and its stakeholders (as well as welfare authorities and officers) to identify and track the numbers of injured, traded (sold/exported), retired and deceased greyhounds in an open and transparent way. This may take the form of a single register whereby each greyhound whelped is microchipped and recorded on one central database by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine in collaboration with BnG and the Irish Coursing Club;
- That an improved traceability regime be established, to ensure that the actions of certain owners can be more effectively patrolled and that dogs can be traced throughout their lifespan;
- That the powers of the Welfare Committee of BnG be enhanced and extended and, if necessary, placed on a statutory footing to ensure full independence;
- More accountability should be sought from owners, including an onus to account (and report) regularly on the status of greyhounds in their possession;
- That data on greyhound welfare available to BnG, such as that on rehoming figures from the Retired Greyhound Trust, should be provided to recognised welfare and voluntary rescue groups or published publicly in a timely way;

⁴⁴ The ICC is responsible for issuing fixed payment notices in relation to breaches of the *Welfare of Greyhounds Act, 2011*.

- That the issue of abandonment of greyhounds be treated in legislation (if necessary) and for the rehoming / rescue of greyhounds should be actively encouraged in order to increase the percentage of greyhounds rescued annually (from local authority pounds and elsewhere) from 38% in 2014 and to reduce the numbers of racing dogs euthanised annually (57% of those admitted to local authority pounds in 2014). This may take the form of an additional funding provision from BnG to the Retired Greyhound Trust to aid its work in finding homes for retired dogs (as recommended in the Indecon Review – see **Appendix 4**, recommendation #24);
- That the sanctioning regime be clarified and strengthened and that authorised officers (i.e. the Area Stipendiary Stewards) take an increasingly proactive approach in order to deter abuse and prevent cruelty to greyhounds and to encourage accurate and timely reporting;
- That more stringent penalties to tackle certain offences such as owners who fail to transfer ownership when they give away or sell a registered greyhound;
- That a person found guilty of serious and on-going cruelty within the industry should receive a lifetime ban.

Recommendation 11:

The Committee recommends that the ongoing issues concerning the breeding of greyhounds with dogs deceased for two years or more, registered in the stud book by the ICC, must be addressed immediately.

5.4 Prize money and breeder's incentive scheme

The Minister stated that it is his desire that the additional funds allocated to the industry (i.e. BnG) for 2016 “should be given back to the greyhound trainers, owners and breeders” in the form of increased prize money. The IGOBF strongly criticised the recent cuts to prize money, as follows:

“The first action of the newly appointed chief executive [of BnG] was to cut prize money by 20%. That is one of the reasons owners walked away. A prize of €200 was cut by 20%. As a result, a dog would have to win 13 graded races in a year to pay for itself. Some dogs would not even get to run 13 times, never mind win every one of its races.”

BnG confirmed to the Committee that the additional funding will be directly, at least partially, toward an increase in prize money. According to the Chairman, Mr. Phil Meaney:

“The additional moneys announced in last week's budget will be targeted directly at the industry, through significant increases in prize money and the development of other supports”.

However, BnG also faces other financial constraints such as the debt issues and a lack of money to market the industry. Notably, BnG indicated that it intends to make €1.3m in debt repayments in 2015 “part of [which] will come from the increased allocation this year from Government funding”.

Recommendation 12:

The level of prize money directly impacts the viability of the industry. Therefore, the Committee recommends that the Minister should instruct BnG of any additional funds provided by the

exchequer for prize money should be ring-fenced. Any unused prize money should be returned to the exchequer and not used for debt servicing or for other operational or marketing purposes. This should be reported to the relevant Oireachtas Committee on an annual basis.

5.5 Use of prohibited substances

The use of controlled and illegal substances in greyhound racing in Ireland is of grave concern. Following a recommendation of the Indecon Review, BnG has published the Control Committee report results for 2013 and 2014 which detail outcomes of situations where prohibited substances were found to be present in samples taken from racing greyhounds across the country. BnG also stated to the Committee that it supports mandatory penalties for a range of offences but that this will entail changes to primary legislation. In the interim, increased penalties in the form of monetary fines and testing orders have been imposed.

However the Welfare Members of the International Welfare Committee noted that between 2011 and 2013, as a result of 30 investigations, fixed notice penalties were issued in only 4 cases but no exclusion orders or disqualification order were issued.

As identified by the GRAI, the use of performance enhancing drugs (i.e. anabolic steroids), narcotics such as cocaine and pharmaceuticals such as Viagra is widespread across the industry in Britain. The GRAI also specifically highlighted an issue with stanozolol (an anabolic steroid) whereby it is possible for the presence of the drug to go undetected owing to testing techniques in the BnG laboratories.

IGOBF stated that dogs on medication should not be racing, in accordance with a zero tolerance policy. However, according to the Federation, this policy is not followed by BnG who insist following a 'threshold' / tolerance level approach. IGOBF strongly recommends that any dog which tests positive for a prohibited substance be immediately disqualified, regardless of how that substance entered the animal.

Recommendation 13:

The Committee recommends that a zero tolerance policy is vital on the issue of prohibited substances in greyhound racing. Therefore, a stringent adherence to best practice international standards is highly recommended to protect and develop the industry for future generations as highlighted in the Morris Report and must be expedited.

Glossary

BnG	Bord na gCon (Irish Greyhound Board)
C&AG	Comptroller and Auditor General
GOBA	Regional Greyhound Owners and Breeders Association
GRAI	Greyhound Rescue Association of Ireland
HGRF	Horse and Greyhound Racing Fund
HRI	Horse Racing Ireland
ICC	Irish Coursing Club
IGOBF	Irish Greyhound Owners and Breeders Federation
ISPCA	Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
RGT	Retired Greyhound Trust
SIs	Statutory Instruments

Appendix 1: Bord na gCon turnover from racing facilities (2006-2013)

The following are comparative tables detailing the composition of turnover (revenue) of BnG over the period 2006-2013.

Table 4: Nominal turnover⁴⁵

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
	€	€	€	€	€	€	€	€
Tote receipts	50,527,818	48,361,958	44,045,453	32,884,036	24,464,543	23,868,379	22,155,001	20,856,142
Bookmaker income	864,612	743,269	777,914	606,036	429,709	357,193	306,629	263,498
Gate receipts / programme sales	5,687,521	5,916,970	5,466,583	3,821,485	3,175,876	3,252,220	3,015,381	3,031,081
Catering income	3,001,565	3,022,696	2,722,732	1,672,756	1,365,262	1,407,342	1,231,959	1,290,709
Sponsorship - Board / Private Tracks	1,245,402	2,097,456	1,742,962	1,508,889	896,562	944,612	954,769	878,874
Entry Fees - Board / Private Tracks	890,856	1,666,680	1,705,896	1,566,136	1,390,758	1,302,920	1,233,460	1,235,312
Dog Sales Commission	67,020	39,450	29,382	28,832	17,582	16,151	6,816	5,718
Miscellaneous	981,767	1,264,470	1,296,617	1,112,935	1,158,173	1,152,868	1,168,618	1,149,427
Net return on Pension Scheme Assets	189,000	321,000	239,000	22,000	-31,000	-430,000	-480,000	-550,000
Total	63,455,561	63,433,949	58,026,539	43,223,105	32,867,465	31,871,685	29,592,633	28,160,761

Source: Indecon (2014) [Review of Certain Matters Relating to BnG](#), p.ii

Table 5: Proportional turnover

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Tote receipts	79.6	76.2	75.9	76.1	74.4	74.9	74.9	74.1
Bookmaker income	1.4	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.3	1.1	1.0	0.9
Gate receipts / programme sales	9.0	9.3	9.4	8.8	9.7	10.2	10.2	10.8
Catering income	4.7	4.8	4.7	3.9	4.2	4.4	4.2	4.6
Sponsorship - Board / Private Tracks	2.0	3.3	3.0	3.5	2.7	3.0	3.2	3.1
Entry Fees - Board / Private Tracks	1.4	2.6	2.9	3.6	4.2	4.1	4.2	4.4
Dog Sales Commission	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0
Miscellaneous	1.5	2.0	2.2	2.6	3.5	3.6	3.9	4.1
Net return on Pension Scheme Assets	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.1	-0.1	-1.3	-1.6	-2.0

Source: Oireachtas Library & Research Service calculation based on Indecon (2014) [Review of Certain Matters Relating to BnG](#), p.ii

⁴⁵ Note that the Bord na gCon [Annual Report 2014](#) was published on 31 August 2015.

Appendix 2: Summary of Key Features of Legislation (Governance and Structures)

Table 6: Legislative overview

Legislation	Purpose
Greyhound Industry Act, 1958	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishes BnG. Defines composition of and process of nomination and appointment to and dismissal from the Board of BnG. Identifies the functions of BnG and the role of the ICC as subject to the general control and direction of BnG.
Greyhound Industry (Amendment) Act, 1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removes the requirement that up to 3 members of the Board be drawn from the Executive Committee. Introduces staggering of board appointments.
Horse & Greyhound Racing (Betting Charges & Levies) Act, 1999	Permits BnG to establish and control subsidiary companies that in turn can enter into joint ventures with 3rd parties.
Horse & Greyhound Racing Act, 2001	Requires the BnG CEO to give evidence to the appropriate committee of the Oireachtas.
Greyhound Industry (Control Committee and Control Appeals Committee) Regulations, 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replaces Control Committee established under Article 3 of Statutory Instrument No. 158/1993 with a new Control Committee and new Control Appeal Committee to have jurisdiction over control and compliance with the rules and regulations concerning greyhound racing. Empowers the board of BnG to appoint all 5 members of the Control Committee and all 3 members of the Control Appeal Committee subject to certain qualifications for membership. Designates officers appointed by the Board of BnG to be Secretaries of the Control Committee and Control Appeal Committee. Transfers full authority from the Board of BnG to the Control Committee for investigations, disqualification of greyhounds, and exclusion of persons from racetracks, and greyhound sales and to the Control Appeal Committee for appeals. Neither Control Committee nor Control Appeal Committee decisions are subject to confirmation by the Board and the findings may be published at the discretion of the two committees.
Greyhound Industry (Racing) Regulations, 2007	<p>Revokes the <i>Greyhound Race Track (Racing) Regulations, 1993</i> and subsequent amendments thereto and specifies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> qualifications for conduct of racing including weight variations, conditions of entry into and withdrawal of greyhounds from races, and conditions of dog ownership. racing procedures and conditions for declarations of "No race". rules for race cards, prize monies, stakes, entry fees, Classics / Features / Sweepstakes, track records. rules for appointment of key track officials and stewards and their duties, powers and number. duties of race track executives including record keeping, compliance with directions from and reporting to the board of BnG. procedures for handling of appeals. rules for handling of betting disputes and betting regulations for instances of dog withdrawals, dead-heats and photo-finishes.
Greyhound Industry (Control Committee and Control Appeal Committee) (Amendment) Regulation, 2008	<p>Amends Greyhound Industry (Control Committee and Control Appeal Committee) Regulations, 2007 and substitutes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> observations by the board of BnG for observations by the Control Committee during an appeal. the Board of BnG for the Control Committee as a party to an appeal. the Board of BnG for the Control Committee as the party that can make submissions and requests for oral hearings to the Control Appeal Committee in relation to an appeal. <p>Adds the Board of BnG as the second recipient of notices of appeal received by the Control Appeal Committee.</p>
Welfare of Greyhounds Act, 2011	Provides for the regulation of the operation of greyhound breeding to be optimised and established a register of greyhound breeding establishments. Act allows for penalties of up to €5,000 and / or up to six months in prison.
Greyhound Industry (Control Committee and Control Appeal Committee)(Amendment) Regulation, 2015	The result of any adverse analytical tests of a greyhound for prohibited substances will be published (following confirmation of the presence of banned substances and ahead of a hearing by the Greyhound industry's Control Committee).
Greyhound Industry (Racing) (Amendment) (No.2) Regulations, 2015	Information relating to that greyhound will also be published and the greyhound immediately banned from racing until a further a test is undertaken.

Source: Indecon (2014) [Review of Certain Matters Relating to Bord na gCon](#), p.27 and Oireachtas Library & Research Service.

Appendix 3: C&AG Special Report into the Development of Limerick Greyhound Racing Stadium

Following a significant rise in the borrowings of BnG (from €10m-€11m in 2006/7 to €20m+ in 2014) arising principally from the €21m development of Limerick Greyhound Stadium, the C&AG investigated the issue and published a Special Report in August 2014.

The main findings of the Report are as follows:

- The stadium project, contemplated since 2000, was completed in October 2010 at Greenpark for a cost of €21m;
- BnG purchased a 16-acre site at Meelick for €1.02m in April 2005. Inclusive of initial development costs, the total cost of the site was €1.75m. It was concluded ultimately that access difficulties made this site untenable and an alternative was required (though the site was retained by BnG). The site was valued at the end of 2012 at €150,000.
- In June 2008, BnG purchased an alternative 11.5 acre-site at Greenpark for €3.4m. The Board had already approved a budget of €17.8m (excluding VAT) for the design and construction of the new stadium in April 2008.
- There were questions around the thoroughness of the manner in which the capital appraisal of the project was undertaken, particularly relating to revenue forecasts and forecast activity levels. The C&AG found no evidence that BnG had conducted sensitivity analysis which would have allowed it to identify the commercial viability of the project which it states “was heavily dependent on assumptions around increases in the tote betting contribution and track profit”. Notably, BnGs profit from racing had declining significantly in 2008 – the year before the decision was formally taken to proceed with the Limerick development;
- Overall, forecasted profits from the track operation and the tote at Limerick have been well below the projected levels and are forecast to remain so in the period to 2015.
- As a result of the project, net borrowing for BnG has significantly increased from less than €10m in 2007 to approximately €23m by December 2012. BnG has a borrowing limit of €25m as sanctioned by the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism in 2007.

Appendix 4: The Indecon Review and Bord na gCon response

Commissioned by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, a review into certain matters relating to BnG was published in July 2014.⁴⁶ A summary of the report and recommendations is provided in the Table below.

Table 7: Indecon Review of Certain Matters relating to Bord na gCon (Summary)

Area	Topic	Indecon Recommendation
Finances	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Revenue from racing facilities for BnG (excluding income from the HGRF) have declined significantly in the period between 2006 and 2013, crystallised by a reduction in revenue from €63.5 million to €28.2 million, representing a fall of 55.6%. The Tote receipt figures further reflect the decline of the group's finances over the same period, falling from over €50 million in 2006 to €20.9 million in 2013.The debt of the organisation now stands at over €21 million as a result of the declining revenue.Attendance figures are also down, resulting in a fall in income generated from gate receipts, programme sales, entry fees, and catering income by nearly €5.5 million between 2007 and 2013. As a result of reduced attendances, sponsorship money has declined by nearly €1.25 million since 2007.BnG has implemented a cost cutting programme, reducing overall expenses in half (from 2006 levels);BnG faces an underfunded pension plan. This underfunding stood at nearly €7 million at the end of 2013;The success of a recent strategic plan (2013-2017) is dependent on expanding income from new products, advertising, sponsorship, and Tote revenues. In conjunction with this, costs have been reduced significantly and it will be difficult to find areas where they can be reduced further unless the number of races held at each venue is altered. The Indecon report cites the main concern as the inability of existing revenue streams to adequately support the current level of activity in the sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A plan for asset disposals should be implemented (Rec 7);Calibrate the number of race meetings at poorly performing stadia (Rec 8);Priority focus on co-mingling and fixed odds betting opportunities (Rec 9);Further exploration of alternative sources of commercial income at stadia (Rec 10);Further develop the plan to resolve the pension scheme underfunding (Rec 11);
	Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The Main Board, consisting of a Chairperson and six members, is relatively small. This raises the issue of whether or not there is a sufficient mix of resources to meet challenges and Indecon recognises skill gaps in the report. In particular, a dearth of financial expertise on the Board needs to urgently be addressed in the face of the financial problems facing BnG. There also exist skill gaps in the legal and marketing fields on the Board.Board members also sit on a number of sub-committees and other subsidiary boards, meaning that they attend a large number of meetings and thus the demands on them may be unrealistic.Another potentially damaging feature of the Board's

⁴⁶ Indecon (2014) [Review of Certain Matters Relating to Bord na gCon](#), July 2014.

	<p>structure is the frequent re-appointment of members for multiple terms, therefore inhibiting the emergence of new and innovative ideas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The report notes that the identification and dealing with the subject of risk is an issue poorly addressed by the Board. Personnel matters – in particular, absences - have been identified as a stumbling block preventing thorough auditing of the organisation. The auditing problems have been somewhat addressed recently by the outsourcing of some auditing procedures in June 2013, and by the establishment of an Executive Risk Committee. ▪ The report highlights the construction of a new racing venue at Limerick as an example of how poor corporate structure and practice led to bad decision-making on the venue. Critical assumptions and Tote receipt estimates were unchallenged at the decision-making stage, and no sensitivity analysis was presented. The Indecon report declares the appraisal of the Limerick racecourse project inadequate. Arising from the Limerick project, BnG have pledged to complete a detailed project approval exercise for all capital projects costing more than €25,000, and to undertake risk assessment and sensitivity analysis for future plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BnG to ensure adequate internal resources to meet the needs of the organisation (Rec 6).
<p>Regulation, Animal Welfare and Breeding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BnG is responsible for the regulation of the industry under the <i>Greyhound Racing Industry Act 1958</i>. The report welcomes the recent appointment of a Director of Racing Governance & Compliance to strengthen the area of regulation. ▪ The two central bodies for regulation are the Control Committee and the Control Appeal Committee. The report recognises the potential for serious reputational damage to the industry arising from decisions concerning cases where greyhounds have tested positive for banned substances, and recommends a more rigorous control system for effective regulation. ▪ The report investigated the evidence on the testing conducted by the Board, and was encouraged by the fact that a large number of samples had been taken from greyhounds at racetracks. However, the report identified two major issues. Firstly, the number of positive tests found, and secondly, the gap between the number of positive tests and the number of adverse findings published. Indecon was also concerned with procedural issues, principally the practice by the Control Committee of dismissing positive tests on the basis of differing storage temperatures in laboratories. ▪ It is recommended that that the workload involved in testing might be better met in a large specialist laboratory as opposed to being conducted in the National Greyhound Laboratory in Limerick. However, the report recognised that the high capital costs involved in investing in modern testing equipment may be prohibitive. ▪ Legally, BnG does not currently have the right to conduct off-course testing, a significant deficiency in greyhound 	<p>Regulatory Controls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Minister to appoint the members of the statutory independent Greyhound Racing Control Committee and Control Appeal Committee (Rec 12); ▪ Rigorous procedures and processes for regulatory control must be consistently implemented (Rec 13); ▪ Mandatory penalties including exclusion orders and disqualification orders to be imposed for breaches of regulations (Rec 14); ▪ Regulations and procedures should be introduced to ensure effective enforcement of penalties (Rec 15); ▪ Both BnG and the ICC should be able to independently serve exclusion orders and disqualification orders (rec 16); ▪ Off-track testing for prohibited substances to be implemented (Rec 17); ▪ Data on the number of tests undertaken, the number of positive tests and the number of adverse findings to be published (Rec 18); ▪ All adverse findings to be published within pre-defined periods subject to rules for adjournments and appeals (Rec

regulation.

- Likewise, the report recommends exclusion and disqualification orders as standard punishments in cases of greyhound cruelty. Additionally, it is recommended that the range of potential sanctions be widened and that more resources should be invested in unannounced inspections.
- The number of greyhounds being bred for racing has fallen steadily in recent years, and Indecon notes that this limits the numbers of racing dogs, which has a knock-on effect in terms of race attendance figures and Tote income.

19);

- Consideration of laboratory testing to be transferred to independent laboratories over time to ensure economies of scale (Rec 20);
- Licencees to disclose on an annual basis any adverse findings and any information in relation to matters under investigation as part of their licence application (Rec 21);
- Formal information sharing arrangements to take place with enforcement agencies including Customs and Excise and An Garda Síochána (Rec 22);

Greyhound Welfare

- Strengthen the sanctions for animal cruelty (Rec 23);
- Additional supports should be provided for rehomed greyhounds (Rec 24);
- Data on the number of welfare inspections and penalties imposed should be published (Rec 25);

Breeding Greyhounds

- A specific additional breeding incentive should be considered by BnG (Rec 26);
- Once BnG's debt is reduced and surpluses generated, additional prize money should be provided (Rec 27).

Bord na gCon response

Following the publication of the Indecon Review, BnG submitted an action plan on 10 October 2014 with timelines for implementing the 27 recommendations.⁴⁷ According to its response to the Review, BnG also stated the following:

“While there will be ongoing consultation on the progress of these implementations, IBG is committed to submit a formal appraisal progression report of all recommendations to Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine by year end 2015”.⁴⁸

An update to the action plan was provided to the Committee on 16 October 2015 and states the following:

⁴⁷ Bord na gCon (2014) [Irish Greyhound Board response to Indecon Report of Certain Matters Relating to Bord na gCon](#), 10 October 2014.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p. 22.

Table 8: Implementation of Indecon Review recommendations – progress to date

Status of Recommendation (colour code)	
	Implemented.
	In the process of being implemented.
	Subject to further review.
	Requires amending legislation.

Recommendation		Status
1. Strengthening of Board of Directors and management.	Additional appointments to the Board and the restructured appointment process	Subject to Departmental (DAFM) Review
	Board members to step down from local boards	Approved
	Review of subsidiary structure	Reviewed and revised structure to be implemented
	Training for Board members	Implemented
	Review effectiveness of Board	Ongoing
2. Immediate appointment of Risk Officer.	Expansion of Executive Risk Committee & appointment of Risk Facilitator	Implemented
	Risk communication policy	Implemented
3. Quarterly review of updated Risk Register	Updated risk register reviewed by Audit Committee & Board	Implemented.
	Ensure sufficient risk rating to key risks.	Implemented.
4. Revised Corporate Governance	Complete review with introduction of new internal Code of Corporate Governance appropriate to the BnG	Work ongoing.
	Division of responsibilities between executive and the Board	Ongoing.
	Internal staff communication policy	Ongoing.
5. Enhanced Reporting by Internal Auditors directly to the Board	Enhanced reporting by the Audit committee to the Board	Implemented.
	Audit Committee to set annual schedule of regular meetings & audit priorities	Implemented.
	Formal tender for internal audit services with chosen service provider to be	Appointed.

	approved by the Board.	
6. BnG to ensure adequate internal resources to meet the needs of the organisation	Staff Opinion Survey	Results analysed, staff communication on main results issued. Action plan on feedback being prepared.
	Review of staff structure and training needs identified	Ongoing. Training needs analysis underway.
	Develop corporate unit	Unit in process of establishment.
	Staff recognition policy	Draft policy prepared.
7. A plan for asset disposal should be implemented	Non-core assets – tender for sale of non-core assets	Former IGB HQ (Henry Street) sale agreed.
	Core Assets – Conduct zoning and due diligence on all core assets	
	Core Assets – Tender for sale chosen core assets.	Implemented.
8. Calibrate the number of race meetings at poorly performing stadia	Preparation of Key Performance Indicators for track performance	Implemented.
	Review of racing programme & financial support for higher profile events	Implemented.
	Review of operational performance and plans for track improvement	Implemented.
	Effectiveness review of Head office operations	Implemented.
	Analyse updated KPI results from all stadia	Implemented.
	Restructure of levy collection process	Subject to on-going legislative review.
9. Priority focus on co-mingling and fixed wagering odds opportunities	Development of BnG information technology environments	Implemented.
	Develop co-mingling contracts & income streams	Implemented.
	Conclude negotiations with TV providers	Trail on-going.
	Increase size of Tote Pool liquidity	Commenced and on-going.

	Enhancement of archived video footage	Technical work completed. Now in a position to market achieved video.
10. Further exploration of commercial income at stadia (Strategic marketing focus to boost attendance)	2015 Marketing plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jumping in the City 	Implemented.
	Outbound sales test	Implemented.
	Evaluation of F&B model	Implemented.
	Sponsorship Strategy Adoption	Implemented.
	Marketing resource confirmation	Implemented.
	Digital strategy implementation	Implemented.
	Ownership & Breeding Programmes	Industry consultation document being evaluated.
	CRM/Loyalty Evaluation	Programme under trial.
11. Develop a further plan to resolve the pension scheme underfunding	Proposals to Board	Submitted to DAFM and Pension Trustee for their consideration.
12. Minister to appoint members of the statutory independent Greyhound Racing Control Committee and Control Appeal Committee	Committees should have access to scientific and legal expertise	Subject to DAFM enactment of amending legislation.
	Staggered appointments to committees	Subject to DAFM enactment of amending legislation.
13. Rigorous procedures and processes for regulatory control must be consistently implemented	Keep under review protocols in light of control committee decisions	Implemented.
	Set up a Scientific group to advise on rules relating to doping and medication control	Implemented.
	Review of Standard Operating Procedures in the areas of Anti-doping and sampling race night operations. Track maintenance. Racetrack security.	Implemented.

	Ensure consistency between protocols	Implemented.
14. Mandatory penalties including exclusion orders and disqualification orders to be imposed for breaches of regulations	Review of potential proposals and industry consultation	Mandatory suspension of greyhounds possessing adverse findings from 1 October 2015.
	New Regulatory plan to be launched	Implemented (2 nd round consultation launched and review of feedback to take place Q4 2015).
15. Regulations and procedures to be introduced to ensure effective enforcement of penalties (New Regulatory Racing Code)	Draft statutory Instruments	2 SIs implemented.
	SOPs complete and available on-line	SOPs completed.
	Anti-doping and medication control-independent review	Final draft report circulated.
	BnG booklet on penalties and procedures	Ongoing.
16. BnG and ICC to independently serve exclusion orders and disqualification orders	Liaising with DAFM on changes required	Requires amending legislation. Being considered by DAFM.
17. Off-track testing for prohibited substances to be implemented	To be launched as part of New Testing Framework using 2007 Racing Regulations, Animal Remedies Act 1993 and amendments to secondary legislation	Testing at sales implemented, further legislation required for all off track testing.
18. Data on the number of tests undertaken, the number of positive tests and the number of adverse findings to be published	Publish on website and annual report	Implemented (with effect on 1 October 2015)
	Options paper presented	Implemented.
	Resource centre launched on-line	Implemented.
	Complete regulations department to build into this resource, with various subsections	Ongoing.
	Publish sampling data.	Ongoing.
19. All adverse findings to be published within pre-defined	Standard procedures on publications to be developed	Implemented.

periods subject to rules for adjournments and appeals		
20.Consideration of laboratory testing to be transferred to independent laboratories over time to ensure economies of scale	SOP's for sampling to be published to reduce delays and increase efficiency of chain of custody with laboratory	A number of options being explored.
	Proposals submitted on future laboratory services	As per above.
21.Licence applicants to disclose on an annual basis any information in relation to matters under investigation as part of their licence application	Interviews with trainers under application for a licence, attaching conditions to licences subject to disclosure of information and intelligence gathering on connected parties.	Implemented.
22.Formal information sharing arrangements to take place with enforcement agencies including Customs and Excise and An Garda Síochána	Meetings and knowledge sharing with DAFM Special Investigators and various other SGB's,ITC,GBGB,BHA,etc	Implemented.
	Introduction of reciprocal agreements	Ongoing.
23.Strengthen the sanctions for animal cruelty	Intelligence lead enforcement policy to be developed	Implemented.
	Increased number of unannounced kennel inspections	Implemented.
	Authorise welfare committee to make & publish adverse findings of animal cruelty	Implemented as part of intelligence system.
	Endorsing licences for welfare abuses	Implemented.
	Review allocation resources to welfare inspections	Implemented.
	Resolve transfer of ownership problem	Ongoing.

	Issuance of fixed penalty and welfare notices under the <i>Welfare of Greyhound Act, 2011</i> .	Implemented.
24. Additional supports should be provided for rehoming greyhounds	Checks on overseas agencies involved in rehoming	Ongoing.
	Increased funding for RGT depending on BnG financial performance	Ongoing.
25. Data on the number of welfare inspections and penalties imposed should be published	Publish results general welfare on new resource centre of BnG website	Implemented.
26. Specific additional breeding incentive	For review and discussion with proposed focus group	Consultation being evaluated.
27. Additional prize money to be provided after BnG's debt is reduced and surpluses are generated	Additional prize money will be allocated when resources permit	Proposals to be announced taking effect January 2016.

Source: BnG. Colour coding provided for illustrative purposes only by the Oireachtas Library & Research Service (L&RS).

Appendix 5: Membership of the Joint Committee

Deputies: Tom Barry (FG)
Pat Deering (FG) [Vice-Chairman]
Andrew Doyle (FG) [Chairman]
Martin Ferris (SF)
Martin Heydon (FG)
Willie Penrose (LAB)
Éamon Ó Cuív (FF)
Thomas Pringle (IND)
Arthur Spring (LAB)

Senators: Michael Comiskey (FG)
Denis Landy (LAB)
Paschal Mooney (FF)
Mary Ann O'Brien (IND)
Brian Ó Domhnaill (FF)
Pat O'Neill (FG)

Appendix 6: Terms of Reference

a. Functions of the Committee – derived from Standing Orders [DSO 82A; SSO 70A]

- (1) The Select Committee shall consider and report to the Dáil on—
 - (a) such aspects of the expenditure, administration and policy of the relevant Government Department or Departments and associated public bodies as the Committee may select, and
 - (b) European Union matters within the remit of the relevant Department or Departments.
- (2) The Select Committee may be joined with a Select Committee appointed by Seanad Éireann to form a Joint Committee for the purposes of the functions set out below, other than at paragraph (3), and to report thereon to both Houses of the Oireachtas.
- (3) Without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (1), the Select Committee shall consider, in respect of the relevant Department or Departments, such—
 - (a) Bills,
 - (b) proposals contained in any motion, including any motion within the meaning of Standing Order 164,
 - (c) Estimates for Public Services, and
 - (d) other mattersas shall be referred to the Select Committee by the Dáil, and
 - (e) Annual Output Statements, and
 - (f) such Value for Money and Policy Reviews as the Select Committee may select.
- (4) The Joint Committee may consider the following matters in respect of the relevant Department or Departments and associated public bodies, and report thereon to both Houses of the Oireachtas:
 - (a) matters of policy for which the Minister is officially responsible,
 - (b) public affairs administered by the Department,
 - (c) policy issues arising from Value for Money and Policy Reviews conducted or commissioned by the Department,
 - (d) Government policy in respect of bodies under the aegis of the Department,
 - (e) policy issues concerning bodies which are partly or wholly funded by the State or which are established or appointed by a member of the Government or the Oireachtas,
 - (f) the general scheme or draft heads of any Bill published by the Minister,
 - (g) statutory instruments, including those laid or laid in draft before either House or both Houses and those made under the European Communities Acts 1972 to 2009,
 - (h) strategy statements laid before either or both Houses of the Oireachtas pursuant to the Public Service Management Act 1997,
 - (i) annual reports or annual reports and accounts, required by law, and laid before either or both Houses of the Oireachtas, of the Department or bodies referred to in paragraph (4)(d) and (e) and the overall operational results, statements of strategy and corporate plans of such bodies, and
 - (j) such other matters as may be referred to it by the Dáil and/or Seanad from time to time.
- (5) Without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (1), the Joint Committee shall consider, in respect of the relevant Department or Departments—
 - (a) EU draft legislative acts standing referred to the Select Committee under Standing Order 105, including the compliance of such acts with the principle of subsidiarity,
 - (b) other proposals for EU legislation and related policy issues, including programmes and guidelines prepared by the European Commission as a basis of possible legislative action,

- (c) non-legislative documents published by any EU institution in relation to EU policy matters, and
 - (d) matters listed for consideration on the agenda for meetings of the relevant EU Council of Ministers and the outcome of such meetings.
- (6) A sub-Committee stands established in respect of each Department within the remit of the Select Committee to consider the matters outlined in paragraph (3), and the following arrangements apply to such sub-Committees:
 - (a) the matters outlined in paragraph (3) which require referral to the Select Committee by the Dáil may be referred directly to such sub-Committees, and
 - (b) each such sub-Committee has the powers defined in Standing Order 83(1) and (2) and may report directly to the Dáil, including by way of Message under Standing Order 87.
- (7) The Chairman of the Joint Committee, who shall be a member of Dáil Éireann, shall also be the Chairman of the Select Committee and of any sub-Committee or Committees standing established in respect of the Select Committee.
- (8) The following may attend meetings of the Select or Joint Committee, for the purposes of the functions set out in paragraph (5) and may take part in proceedings without having a right to vote or to move motions and amendments:
 - (a) Members of the European Parliament elected from constituencies in Ireland, including Northern Ireland,
 - (b) Members of the Irish delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and
 - (c) at the invitation of the Committee, other Members of the European Parliament.

b. Scope and Context of Activities of Committees (as derived from Standing Orders [DSO 82; SSO 70])

- (1) The Joint Committee may only consider such matters, engage in such activities, exercise such powers and discharge such functions as are specifically authorised under its orders of reference and under Standing Orders.
- (2) Such matters, activities, powers and functions shall be relevant to, and shall arise only in the context of, the preparation of a report to the Dáil and/or Seanad.
- (3) It shall be an instruction to all Select Committees to which Bills are referred that they shall ensure that not more than two Select Committees shall meet to consider a Bill on any given day, unless the Dáil, after due notice given by the Chairman of the Select Committee, waives this instruction on motion made by the Taoiseach pursuant to Dáil Standing Order 26. The Chairmen of Select Committees shall have responsibility for compliance with this instruction.
- (4) The Joint Committee shall not consider any matter which is being considered, or of which notice has been given of a proposal to consider, by the Committee of Public Accounts pursuant to Dáil Standing Order 163 and/or the C&AG (Amendment) Act 1993.
- (5) The Joint Committee shall refrain from inquiring into in public session or publishing confidential information regarding any matter if so requested, for stated reasons given in writing, by—
 - (a) a member of the Government or a Minister of State, or
 - (b) the principal office-holder of a body under the aegis of a Department or which is partly or wholly funded by the State or established or appointed by a member of the Government or by the Oireachtas:

Provided that the Chairman may appeal any such request made to the Ceann Comhairle / Cathaoirleach whose decision shall be final.

