

DUBLIN CITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2011 - 2017

BACKGROUND PAPER

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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1. Introduction

The creation of sustainable neighbourhoods, the timely provision of sustainable community infrastructure, the integration of new communities and accessibility issues have all been afforded much greater attention in recent years, both nationally and locally. Improving the quality of life is the underlying objective.

Recent Guidelines from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) stress the importance of integrating housing provision with the delivery of community infrastructure. All good neighbourhoods require decent community facilities to underpin them with such facilities ranging from schools, to libraries, community centres, cultural spaces, health centres, facilities for the elderly and persons with disabilities, crèches and other childcare facilities, places of worship etc. The timely provision of appropriate social infrastructure can have hugely positive impacts in the promotion of social inclusion, greatly enhance quality of life for all in the city and help in creating attractive neighbourhoods.

Creating a clean, green and safe city is a core objective of the City Council. With the introduction of the 6 themes the City Council will give equal attention to the social inclusion issue as to the more traditional economic and environment. policies needed for the development of the city.

2. Progress to Date

Considerable progress has been made to date in implementing the Social and Community objectives of the City Development Plan 2005-2011. Examples of progress are:

- Improved participation in decision-making and plan-making processes through the creation and facilitation of consultation mechanisms such as Comhairle na nÓg, significant local consultation on Framework and Local Area Plans through the 5 Area Committees and the Area Office structures
- Provision of community development services through the introduction of new initiatives by the Community Development Section of Dublin City Council such as Unsung Heroes Awards, Communities First Summit and the restructuring of the Community Development Section within the City Council
- Supporting the continued development of Dublin City Development Board and the implementation of the 10 year strategy – A City of Neighbourhoods
- Reducing social exclusion and adhering to the Equal Status Act 2000 through the establishment of an Intercultural Unit, production of an Integration Framework to promote social inclusion of all communities in the city
- Provision and further development of community facilities throughout the city. New youth and recreation facilities
- Provision of appropriate childcare through the implementation the Guidelines for Childcare Facilities in assessing of planning applications and the adoption of the Dublin City Council Childcare Policy in May 2006
- Continued provision of a range of accommodation for the travelling community across the city
- Facilitating the regeneration of areas of the city which have a large number of local authority dwellings, particularly flat complexes through the establishment of Project Offices with dedicated staff, establishment of Regeneration Boards, Community Charters etc.
- Provision of lifetime adaptable and fully accessible homes through the application of Part M of the Building Regulations and the introduction of new standards for apartments which require adaptable homes
- Where proposals for redevelopment of former institutional lands are identified, areas to be set aside for accessible public open space and/or community facilities is set at a minimum of 25%
- Promoting the provision of community facilities and public open spaces in all Local Area Plans and Framework Plans, by identifying such facilities and locations for same, based on the expressed needs of the community identified through consultation

However, despite this progress the overarching challenge of providing the physical context for cohesive communities in Dublin remains relevant during and beyond the life of the current Development Plan and significant challenges remain.

3. Future Trends and Development

This *Social Partnership Agreement* developed a new framework within which key social challenges will be addressed. This will be achieved by assessing the risks and hazards which, the individual person faces, and the supports available to them at each stage in the life cycle. In this way, the life cycle approach adopts the perspective of the person as the centrepiece of social policy development and should help policy to evolve in a manner, which encompasses actions across relevant departments and agencies.

The City Council has adopted the lifecycle framework as the model within which the scope and range of community policy development and actions can be defined. This approach offers the potential of a more streamlined, outcomes-focused approach to monitoring and reporting on progress within social partnership across key national strategies and for improved availability and use of data. The approach is detailed in **Table 1** below:

Providing for the different needs of citizens related to each stage of the lifecycle framework, while also recognising particular community needs, will be a key challenge of the Development Plan.

4. Main Issues and Challenges

4.1 Creating the Sustainable Neighbourhood and Developing Community

In creating a city that is attractive for those already living here i.e. by developing and improving the social and community base for everyone in the city as an end in itself, Dublin City Council must concentrate its efforts on a compact city with a network of sustainable mixed neighbourhoods providing a range of facilities and a choice of tenure and housing types and promote social inclusion and integration of all ethnic communities.

However, the quantity of development need not be at the expense of quality. While the quality of neighbourhoods has been improving over time, with a much greater emphasis now being placed on the provision of larger and better quality homes, there is still room for major improvements in this regard.

Dublin City Council has already begun this process of ensuring the creation of sustainable neighbourhoods and communities in earnest with the devising and adoption of a variation to the existing development plan, '*Achieving Liveable Sustainable New Apartment Homes*'. Section 2.5 of these apartment guidelines makes specific reference to the neighbourhood stating that '*Delivering attractive mixed-income, mixed use neighbourhoods with all the necessary social and other infrastructure and a high quality environment is key to achieving successful neighbourhoods*'. It further states that the qualities of a successful neighbourhood include good parks and play areas; good shopping and other facilities; good schools; leisure facilities, safe streets and efficient public transport. There is a strong emphasis on the fact that there is an even greater need for public facilities in areas of high density. This policy recognises that the provision of highest quality apartment housing is especially important when striving to achieve more balanced, mixed-income communities while social and community infrastructure are vital in ensuring successful housing areas where people choose to live and remain. . Furthermore, Policies recently devised and adopted in December 2007 under Variation 21, are very positive in this regard.

As well as ensuring that new developments make a significant contribution to an area in terms of community infrastructure / planning gain, all developments should also be safe places in which to live while not undermining safety of those in the surrounding environs. Unfortunately crime and anti-social behaviour continue to affect the stability and sustainability of many city communities. While the problem of crime has to be tackled by a wide range of agencies and bodies in the city, the development plan can be instrumental in 'designing out' crime in new developments. The issue here is how can we ensure that developments are built that inhibit anti-social behaviour and crime but still allow for residents of developments and surrounding neighbourhood to interact and meet spontaneously in accessible and communal areas.

One of the key challenges now is to devise clear and robust policies, objectives and standards for the new development plan setting out very clearly how the City Council proposes to fulfil these strategic aims in a realistic fashion.

Furthermore the City Council should consider setting out clearly the key components of a 'sustainable neighbourhood' by way of e.g. a checklist / community proofing tool- kit to serve as a guide to developers, planners and the public.

4.2 The Timely Provision of Community Facilities

In devising new policies and objectives for schools, the City Council should have regard to a recent Code of Practice issued recently by the Department of Education and Science in collaboration with the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government specifically in relation to provision of schools, which set out best-practice approaches that should be followed by planning authorities and the Department of Education and Science in

ensuring the timely and cost-effective provision of schools. In essence these guidelines set out a number of agreed actions that the Planning Authority and / or The Department of Education and Science will undertake.

Specifically in relation to Development Plans the Department of Education and Science has agreed to:

- Identify future primary school demands
- Supply estimates of future accommodation requirements arising from new development to planning authorities as part of the consultation processes for the preparation of the development plans
- Develop a GIS for school planning
- Collaborate with planning authorities in finalising the appropriate policies and objectives to be inserted into development plans
- Consider the use of multi-campus schooling arrangements e.g. 2 or 3 schools side by side; a primary and post primary school sharing a site; schools anchoring wider social and community facilities required in the same area

While planning authorities have agreed to:

- Make available in a timely fashion estimates of future development potential
- Anticipate the demand for new schools infrastructure and facilitate the identification of suitable lands to meet the need for new schools or expansion
- Consult with the Department of Education and Science during the process of making the development plan
- Ensure that schools are fit for purpose
- Seek to locate schools in areas that are easily accessed
- Reserve lands for educational purposes in location close to areas of greatest residential expansion and adjacent to community developments
- Take due account of requirement set out in the Draft Planning Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban areas which requires all planning applications for major housing proposals to be accompanied by assessments of the capacity of local schools to accommodate the proposed development

Furthermore, 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas' (draft) issued by the DOHELG states that no substantial residential development should be permitted without an assessment of the capacity of the existing schools. It is further recommended that any planning application for over 200 residential units should be accompanied by a report identifying the demand for school places likely to be generated by the proposed development and in any proposed scheme for over 800 units consideration should be given by the planning authority to the phasing of completion of such a scheme with the provision of additional school places.

Third Level and Fourth Level Institutions

Dublin City's growth within the global creative / knowledge economy will have to be underpinned by quality third and fourth level educational institutions. The new development plan should continue to be supportive of, and facilitate the expansion, of such institutes.

These facilities are a core component in any city operating in the knowledge economy. A key issue for the next development plan is to reflect the high value that the City Council places on third level educational facilities and to reflect the ambitions of the City Council to support and encourage the expansion and development of third and fourth level educational institutions as pillars of the growing knowledge economy.

Crèches and Other Childcare Facilities

There are 97,769 children living within the City Council area, approximately 20% of the city's population. The Lifecycle approach, encapsulated in the Social Partnership Agreement 2006 – 2016 and endorsed by Dublin City Council, has identified 6 main issues to be addressed in relation to children:

1. Sufficient resources and opportunity for equal participation
2. Access to childcare services and facilities
3. Primary cycle – literacy & numeracy standards
4. Complete senior cycle- supporting their capacity & interests
5. Access to quality play, sport, recreation & culture
6. Access to appropriate participation in decision making

Childcare Facilities

One of the key objectives in the National Development Plan is to address the shortage of childcare spaces nationally. The City Council's has a key responsibility in this regard. While not involved in the direct provision of crèche spaces, the main responsibility of the City Council is the formulation of appropriate policies, objectives and standards to be contained in the Development Plan, delivery of spaces through the Framework Plans and Local Area Plans and implementation through the Development Management (DM) process.

The City Council incorporated policy in the 2005 development plan to have regard to the government Guidelines for Childcare Facilities which, amongst other recommendations contained within, stipulate that one childcare facility be provided in all new developments for every 75 residential units. While the guidelines continue to act as a useful guide, the benefit of experience indicates that their implementation should be on a more considered basis. Dublin City Council should encourage the establishment of appropriate models of childcare facilities taking into consideration location, demographics, socio economic factors and sustainability etc.

Play

The provision of child friendly play spaces has become increasingly recognised as a basic necessity in a successful city, and in creating sustainable places to live. A commitment is made in the apartment guidelines that the Planning Authority will immediately carry out a study of how to most effectively provide for children's play in apartment schemes and the neighbourhood. This study is currently a work in progress. In the absence of such a study the guidelines stipulate that regard shall be had to the *Dublin Docklands Development Authority Play Space Guidelines* which set minimum standards for the provision of play spaces for a range of differing ages to play.

For the new City Development Plan the City Council may adopt Play Guidelines which set out a checklist for developers with developers required to cater for all ages for play, plan for universal ability, identification of need in the area, provide storage for play equipment etc.

Elderly Care Facilities

In a sustainable neighbourhood persons at all stages of the life cycle should be well catered for i.e. from childhood to old age. Attention has been given to the infrastructural needs of the

elderly in the current development plan with policy stating *“it is the policy of Dublin City Council to encourage the provision of community facilities across the city, which caters for all age groups and various community facilities”*, and an objective *“to give consideration to the provision of day facilities / centres for elderly in residential estates”*. These can be further developed in the next development plan to reflect the ageing population base of the city and City Council's expanding role in supporting older people.

Hospitals and Healthcare Facilities

The provision of adequate healthcare facilities, including those care services for the elderly and facilities for the disabled, is a necessity in a healthy city. The current Plan contains a policy *“to support the Health Board in their development of primary care teams in prime urban centres, village and neighbourhood.”* The new development plan should continue to include policies, and if necessary objectives, encouraging and facilitating the development and / or expansion of healthcare facilities and hospitals in the city. However, such policies should avoid allowing a proliferation of social support facilities, such as drug clinics, in areas in the city. A peppering of such facilities across the city is a more appropriate approach. Currently there are certain more vulnerable areas in the city where there are concentrations of social support facilities.

Places of Public Worship

Given the increasingly diverse population profile in the City and the differing religious needs there has been a growing demand for new places of worship throughout the city. The issue for the next plan is how do we facilitate and support such facilities in the city to ensure that they suit the needs of the users, are more permanent in nature and are located in the most appropriate locations in the city.

4.3 Disability & Accessibility

Dublin City Council has prepared an Access Plan to meet the requirements of the Disability Act . Public consultations with people with disabilities and their representative groups were held during the preparation of this plan. This has led to a heightened awareness among stakeholders of their rights and of the duties of Local Authorities.

The issues of disability and accessibility have been given increased prominence in recent years at national level with the introduction of the 2005 Disability Act. Section 36 of the said Act required a Sectoral Plan to be devised. The Sectoral Plan of the DoEHLG is the major policy document relating to disability. The Planning code is addressed as follows: *“The aim of ensuring effective access for all must also be addressed by local authorities when dealing with planning applications for housing and commercial development. The primary issue is to ensure access of approach to buildings. Local authorities must ensure that developers address the design implications of accessibility, the location of disabled car parking and other related issues at an early stage in the development process for both housing and commercial developments”*.

The new development plan will ensure that Dublin City continues to develop as a Universally Accessible City and that, where possible, equality of access will be afforded to all citizens.

4.4 Integration

The most significant change in terms of city population profile has been the increase in ethnic population characterised in early stages by asylum/refugees flows and subsequently primarily

driven by the labour market to support and sustain the strong economic performance and growth of the past 10 years.

While census figures indicate 15% city population is of migrant origin or 75,000 people the figures are more likely closer to 20% or 100,000 people. While the spread of migration is citywide there is significant concentration in centre city areas where a number of city centre wards now have a population the majority of which are from ethnic backgrounds.

While the current economic downturn will create migration outflows immigration is here to stay. Within European and world context mobility of population is a significant factor. Approximately 40 million foreign-born individuals now live in the EU27 and constitute 8.3% of its total population

Economic changes could generate divisions on immigration, with growing discrimination and racism. Political and organisational response needs to be well informed and tuned for response. The City Council has responded in 2008 with policy statement "Towards Integration A City Framework" which sets the context and approach at city level with City Council taking a leadership role.

Integration takes place at the local level and the responsibilities of the City Council extend through its strategic policy and organisational response, in partnership with the network of city agencies, both public and private.

There is a need to consider issues around clustering of immigrant communities in spatial terms with concentration in certain areas, which can be negative (ghettoisation) or positive with a dynamic for change in the development of new ethnic businesses, adding new diversity to areas in decline.

In relation to the creation and usage of urban spaces, regard should be had to the intercultural perspective. Different cultures interpret space differently and this can create tension between different users. City spaces and public parks are spaces for ethnic minorities to congregate in a way, which is socially different from native population.

Different immigrant communities may have different retail, religious, housing, recreational, cultural needs etc. that are from the needs of native population. If so, how role can planning play in catering for the differing needs of our immigrants?

The planning process should be responsive to the planning issues arising from cultural diversity and should seek to actively reaffirm and support the local communities that are emerging as the areas where immigrants settle and have the potential to develop a new local diversity which can revitalise and support urban regeneration. New approaches to work practices, new types of entrepreneurship, links with home countries and other innovative approaches which immigrants can bring can become a basis for stimulating new local economies. The development plans needs to specifically recognise these changes and create the conditions, which enable the potential for local initiatives to be realised.

In recent times there has been a call from some bodies in the city for the creation of a Chinatown, complete with an arch, on Parnell Street. Would such an addition be a beneficial addition to the city's landscape, economy and cultural vibrancy?

Sections above focus on the key issues involved in the creation of an attractive city in which to work, live and remain for long periods of time, both for existing citizens and the 'new Irish'. How to measure the success of policies and objectives implemented is a key consideration for the next plan. One possible way in which this could be done is quantitatively is a measurement of the number of crèche facilities granted and occupied, numbers of schools permitted and built, numbers of community centres built and actively used, number of health facilities permitted and built etc. However, this measurement is a crude measure of success. Perhaps another method that could be utilised is the assessment of the city's success having regard to the defined key characteristics for a sustainable neighbourhood, which the Planning Authority could set out in the next development plan.

5. Summary of Key Issues

Creating Sustainable Communities

1. How can the development plan support the creation of a network of sustainable neighbourhoods that are underpinned by an adequate range of supporting community infrastructure and are safe, green, clean and attractive places for people to live and remain for long periods of their lifecycle?
2. What are the key attributes of a successful 'sustainable neighbourhood'?
3. How can the 'designing out crime' be encouraged in new developments?
4. How can the planning authority measure successes in the area of community development? Should a methodology be devised?

Provision of Community Facilities

5. How can the development plan facilitate the provision of adequate, affordable and appropriate childcare facilities in the city?
6. How can we ensure that new developments make good provision for children's play for all age groups of childhood?
7. How can the development plan facilitate the timely provision of schools?
8. How can the development plan facilitate and encourage the development and growth of 3rd and 4th level educational facilities?
9. How best can facilities for the care of the elderly be delivered in new developments?
10. How can we ensure the provision and/or facilitation of hospitals and healthcare facilities?
11. How can a proliferation of some social support facilities, e.g. drug clinics, be managed in more vulnerable areas of the city?
12. How can Dublin City Council encourage and facilitate community facilities, which are properly resourced, managed and in sustainable locations.

Disability and Accessibility

13. How can we encourage and facilitate the development of Dublin City as a universally accessible city?
14. How can DCC encourage and facilitate the needs of the disabled in development proposals?

Integration

15. Should the development of distinctive ethnic economic enclaves be encouraged in the city e.g. Chinatown?
16. How can the creation of parallel communities and urban ghettos be avoided in the city?