

DUBLIN CITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2011 - 2017

BACKGROUND PAPER

INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL AND REGIONAL DIMENSION OF CAPITAL

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1. Introduction

The current Development Plan sets out the spatial framework for the city within the context of the National Development Plan, National Spatial Strategy and the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area. As such the proposed strategy for Dublin promotes the consolidation of the city, maximising efficient use of land, and integrating land use and transport. The plan seeks to meet the needs of the city, the wider region and the State as a whole. As the capital city, it is vital that Dublin continues to grow and operate on an international scale while at the same time providing for the needs of its residents, workers and visitors alike.

While the Regional Planning Guidelines supports the National Spatial Strategy, the development surge resulting from a prolonged period of economic success has put pressure on infrastructure, created unsustainable commuting patterns and led to an erosion in the quality of the natural environment in some areas.

In addition the built-up area of Dublin City has extended to the City Boundary e.g. (the North Fringe) and this process is likely to continue e.g. at Naas Road. Therefore an increasing need for collaboration between Local Authorities in the City Region.

There is also a growing sense that Dublin should be viewed as a City Region. A consolidating City Region, with some two million people by 2020, is more likely to be able to compete and collaborate with city regions outside Ireland for investment, jobs, tourism etc., provided the City Region is developed as a sustainable Metropolitan Area with quality of life as its core value.

2. Progress To Date

The National Spatial Strategy

The National Spatial Strategy is a 20-year framework for all parts of Ireland. The National Spatial Strategy envisages the continued development of the Greater Dublin Area (GDA), with its population of about 1.2 million, in a more sustainable manner than in the past. Dublin has driven the growth of the Irish economy, but the very success of Dublin's economy has also pushed housing development well beyond the boundaries of the Greater Dublin Area, forcing longer distance commuting and diminution of the quality of life for many young families. Dublin's future growth will be anchored through higher density development around a strengthened and efficient public transport grid.

Investment priorities include:

- Implementation of the key public transport elements of Transport 21, including the completion of Metro North to the Airport and Swords, a major extension of the lightrail network, enhancement of suburban rail and DART services, the provision of additional bus services and further development of the Quality Bus Corridors;
- Major investment in suburban rail including the Kildare line and the opening of a rail link from Dublin to Navan;
- Completion of the M50 upgrade and completion by 2010 of all Major Inter-Urban routes between Dublin and other Gateway centres. These improvements will also greatly benefit the counties in the Region adjoining Dublin;
- Feasibility and planning work on the Eastern Bypass and on a new Outer Orbital Road to serve the Gateway;
- Enhancement of the capacity of Dublin Airport;
- A comprehensive study of the role of Dublin Port, taking account of locational considerations, in the context of overall ports policy on the Island of Ireland;
- Further Investment in Environmental Services Infrastructure to facilitate the consolidated development of the Greater Dublin Area;
- Development of tourism, sport and cultural facilities on a PPP basis (such as the National Conference Centre, the new National Theatre and the new National Concert Hall) or by direct grant (Lansdowne Road Stadium);
- Provision of social, community, cultural, sporting and amenity facilities throughout the Gateway region to match rapidly developing residential development;
- Strengthening the international status and STI capacity of the Gateway's higher education institutes; and
- Continuing investment in urban renewal and enhancement of the physical fabric of the Gateway, e.g. the regeneration of Ballymun.

To date, significant progress has been made on many of the priorities listed above

Regional Planning Guidelines

A vision for the GDA initially expressed in the non-statutory 1999 Strategic Planning Guidelines for the GDA which was superseded by the Regional Planning Guidelines in 2004.

- Dublin will remain the capital city of Ireland and a major European centre, competing with other cities in the EU, and serving a wide range of international, national, regional and local needs.
- Dublin as a City Region shall work as a cluster of urban centres with differentiated but complementary economies separated by strategic green belts and held together by multi-modal transport networks and communications.

- The City-Region is to excel as an international competitor where all areas located within the Greater Dublin Areas collectively contribute to its success and in turn draw their individual strengths from the City-Region.
- Dublin, through its port and airport, will continue to be a very important gateway for the country as a whole between the European Union and to the rest of the world, and consequently the growth of and access to and through the area will continue to be a matter of national significance and be carefully managed.
- Development throughout the Greater Dublin Area will follow a defined settlement strategy which supporting new and existing significantly enhanced public transport network.
- The RPG Settlement Strategy sets out a clear hierarchy with at its core the metropolitan area- of which the City forms the central part. This central vision for the metropolitan area is one of consolidation, allowing for the accommodation of a greater population than at present, with a much-enhanced public transport system and supporting the range of existing services and social facilities necessary. Achieving consolidation requires continuing focus on sustainable development densities as well as measures to ensure priority for public transport. In time, this will lead to a more compact urban form, relative to the size of the population, and will reduce the growth in overall demand for long distance commuting and the development of greenfield lands remote from existing schools, community facilities and infrastructure.
- The growth of the Metropolitan Area will be balanced by the concentration of development into major centres in the Hinterland Area. These towns (or adjacent sets of towns) will each have a high level of employment activity, high order shopping and a full range of social facilities. The economies of particular sub-regions may develop based on specialised sector to create a critical mass of expertise in the catchment area. The longer-term objective will be to create towns, as self-sufficient as is possible, with limited commuting to the Metropolitan Area. To support strong economic ties and to allow for more sustainable forms of commuting, the towns will require to be well linked to Dublin by good road and rail infrastructure.
- The major centres in the Hinterland Area will be separated from each other and from the Metropolitan Area by extensive areas of 'Strategic Green Belt' land devoted to agricultural, natural, leisure and similar uses and within which development will be limited to meeting local needs.

Source: Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area, 2004 and Strategic Planning Guidelines 1999.

While considerable progress has been made in the realisation of this vision, this now needs to be updated, to take on board the new challenges especially those related to competing global city regions, climate change and effective governance.

3. Future Trends and Developments

As the capital, Dublin will continue to occupy a unique position in the economic, social and cultural life of the country. Developing and strengthening the City Region contributes to the overall strength of the country in a competitive global economy.

The Dublin City region will continue to grow in population and output terms. The population of Dublin city was 506,000 in 2006 (representing an increase of 2.1% since 2002) compared to 5.7% in the region as a whole. However, it is not desirable for the city to continue to spread physically into the surrounding counties. The consolidation of Dublin, supported by effective land use policies is an essential component for a competitive city at the heart of the region in the future.

The Revised Regional Planning Guidelines allocated 75,000 new households for Dublin to 2016, which is an indicator of the overall policy to consolidate the metropolitan area, rather than simply provide for trends.

In the future Dublin will remain the economic engine of the state building on recent trends for example, the labour force in the Dublin region has increased by 23% between 1996 and 2007. The Dublin economy provides for 70% of the IT jobs in the state.

However, Dublin's share of long-term unemployment has increased in recent years from 18% of the national total in 2001 to 26% in 2002, indicating a need to focus on up-skilling as Dublin bases its long term future on more knowledge based sectors.

Future consolidation on a sequential basis from the city outwards is also necessary for the public transport system to function effectively. The Transport 21 Programme for the GDA provides the basis for a fully integrated public transport system, including the METRO to the International Airport, the Interconnector between Connolly Station and Heuston Station and new LUAS lines to Lucan, Docklands etc all of which will transform the Dublin Region and City in terms of improved access to employment, education, services and amenities

The Dublin City region in the future must also pursue policies to address climate change and environmental sustainability. There is a need to engage in collaborative arrangements to address issues, for example, the Regional Wastewater Plant to cater for a population equivalent of 2.2 million people, flood management systems, water management and an air quality Plan.

In the future the physical structure of the metropolitan region, in terms of built up areas, green belts and fringes and green recreational / ecological corridors, extending from the Bay to the countryside along the rivers, canals etc., will become important.

Within the Dublin City Region, there remain significant areas of social and economic exclusion. In the future policies must be pursued to redress such social exclusion, as part of an economically sustainable region.

4. Main Issues and Challenges

International Context

At an international level Dublin operates in a highly globalised world economy and one in which large city regions play an increasingly important role. These large city regions compete not on the basis of economy alone but on the basis of hard and soft infrastructure across the environmental social and cultural spectrum. Quality of life is now a key determinant of success, demanded not only by citizens but also necessary to attract and hold on to a talented workforce. Benchmarking is now a standard approach to profiling a city and a low rating in key areas can damage city status and move it down respected league tables with consequent negative impact on investment and confidence. In this context it is critical that cities like Dublin have the ability to analyze their strengths and weaknesses and develop city strategies based on a strong vision. The recent report 'Proyecto Cities' (Dublin City Council 2008) included interviews with 60 senior managers and identified key clusters of excellence in the city as well as establishing priorities for investment. While cities compete, they are also co-operating more. City networks facilitate the exchange of information and knowledge, enable best practice to be established and encourage partnership in projects. While the level of imagination, innovation political focus and resources in some of our competitor cities is often daunting it must inspire us to develop even better frameworks to drive collaborative energy in the city region of Dublin.

National Context

European capitals share some common traits. As the most important urban centre in the country they have a critical role in projecting national identity and promoting the interests of the country in an international arena. They often benefit from a critical scale of population, a strong economic base and from strong educational, cultural and financial institutions. While there is frequently a degree of tension between the capital city and the rest of the country, Governments recognise the unique role of the Capital and acknowledge the benefits their main city can confer on the country as a whole.

While Dublin is often cited as having a disproportionate size of population in relation to the republic as a whole, it is not dissimilar to the national role and scale of cities like Copenhagen, Amsterdam, Vienna or indeed Paris.

The scale of Dublin's economy and population puts the city in a different league and permits economies of scale to be achieved which cannot be matched by other urban centres in the country. The National Development Plan recognises the unique role of the capital as a national gateway and envisages the implementation of Transport 21 and the consolidation of the GDA through integration of transport and land use. The plan also envisages investment in recreation, tourism and sport on a PPP basis. The National Spatial Strategy also endorses consolidation, investment in public transport, and the need to support the national roles of Dublin Airport and Dublin Port. While both the National Development Plan and the National Spatial Strategy support the role of the Capital, there is a need for a wider discourse at national level on how Dublin can meet standards of excellence in key sectors. Strong support at Cabinet level for the role of Dublin could include a review of institutional capacity and instruments to implement urban strategies. Virtually all initiatives require budgets and the existing funding framework seriously hampers the City Council in terms of initiating a range of urban projects that are considered a normal part of leadership and management in other European Capitals.

Regional Context

Regional Planning in the Dublin Area has laid down the fundamentals of settlement strategy and the need to underpin density and consolidation with a commitment to public transport. While the Regional Planning Guidelines supports the National Spatial Strategy, the development surge resulting from a prolonged period of economic success has put pressure

on infrastructure, created unsustainable commuting patterns and led to an erosion in the quality of the natural environment.

Compared to regional planning approaches in cities like Helsinki, Copenhagen, Berlin or Toronto the approach in Dublin has a quieter profile and is focused on transport and population. There is need for discussion on how Regional Planning in Dublin can embrace a set of wider challenges. The green infrastructure, ecology and eco urban systems is one area. Developing settlement and transport policy to incorporate economic thinking and strategy is also critical. The role of an effective core at the heart of a polycentric city region remains largely undiscussed. There is also a need to develop a pro-active branding and seek a more dynamic partnership from key institutions/stakeholders in promoting the region and developing its potential. Currently there is a low appreciation among the general public on regional issues and on the integrated and economic benefits that a successful city regional can confer. The absence of a comprehensive planning database is also a handicap in terms of strategic analysis and as a feed into policy formulation.

The Greater Dublin Area (GDA) must build on the important international role of the region in relation to the global economic zone of London-Amsterdam/Rotterdam-Paris and Frankfurt. Recognising the importance of image and quality of life in relation to location of enterprise in the global economy is of importance, as we continue to attract high quality enterprise to Ireland.

Clustering and specialisms in enterprise will be considered important for our future success.

The National Spatial Strategy highlights inter-regional development futures that we will consider including:

- Building on the important national functions enjoyed in the Greater Dublin Area today
- The future role of the Dublin Belfast transportation corridor incorporating the role of Drogheda in relation to the Greater Dublin Area

The role of the development centres in the hinterland and the rural areas close to the Border and Midlands regions in relation to the gateways of Athlone-Tullamore-Mullingar and Dundalk.

5. Summary of Key Issues

1. How can Dublin further develop a collaborative city network (San Jose etc) to facilitate the exchange of information and encourage partnership in projects?
2. How to build a consensus to brand and promote the Dublin Region internationally, and establish a critical mass of influence for Dublin.
3. Climate change: Could Dublin take a lead in Environmental Green Industries
4. What can be done to develop and support a creative alliance of Sectors in Dublin, including the educational / research sectors e.g. is there a need for an International School?
5. What collaborative mechanisms can be put in place across the Region to ensure environmentally sustainable programmes (e.g. water supply, wastewater management / SUDS and transport) are put in place?
6. How can we re-enforce Dublin's role:
 - As international capital and seat of government.
 - In the global employment pool.
 - In the Rosslare to Belfast Economic corridor.
7. In relation to housing, people often cannot afford houses in their home areas or their work area. Are we predicting a suitable mix of future housing to achieve our other objectives?
8. In relation to transport, issues to be addressed include:
 - Linking to the European transportation network.
 - Managing the demand for travel in city and suburbs.
 - Delivering Transport 21, public transport links to retail and leisure facilities.
 - Developing a sea links appropriate for 21st Century.
 - Optimum future uses for port lands.
 - Airport transport to city.
 - Ensuring consistent travel times from region to airport.
9. In relation to Social Inclusion, issues include:
 - The international role of Dublin as a 3rd and 4 level education centre.
 - Linkages of education and enterprise.
 - Provision of appropriate hospitals and healthcare.
10. What collaborative mechanisms can be put in place to manage the structure and form of a consolidating Metropolitan area, e.g. along the major transport radial routes.
11. How can the green networks and green spatial structure of the Region be more strongly developed and managed.