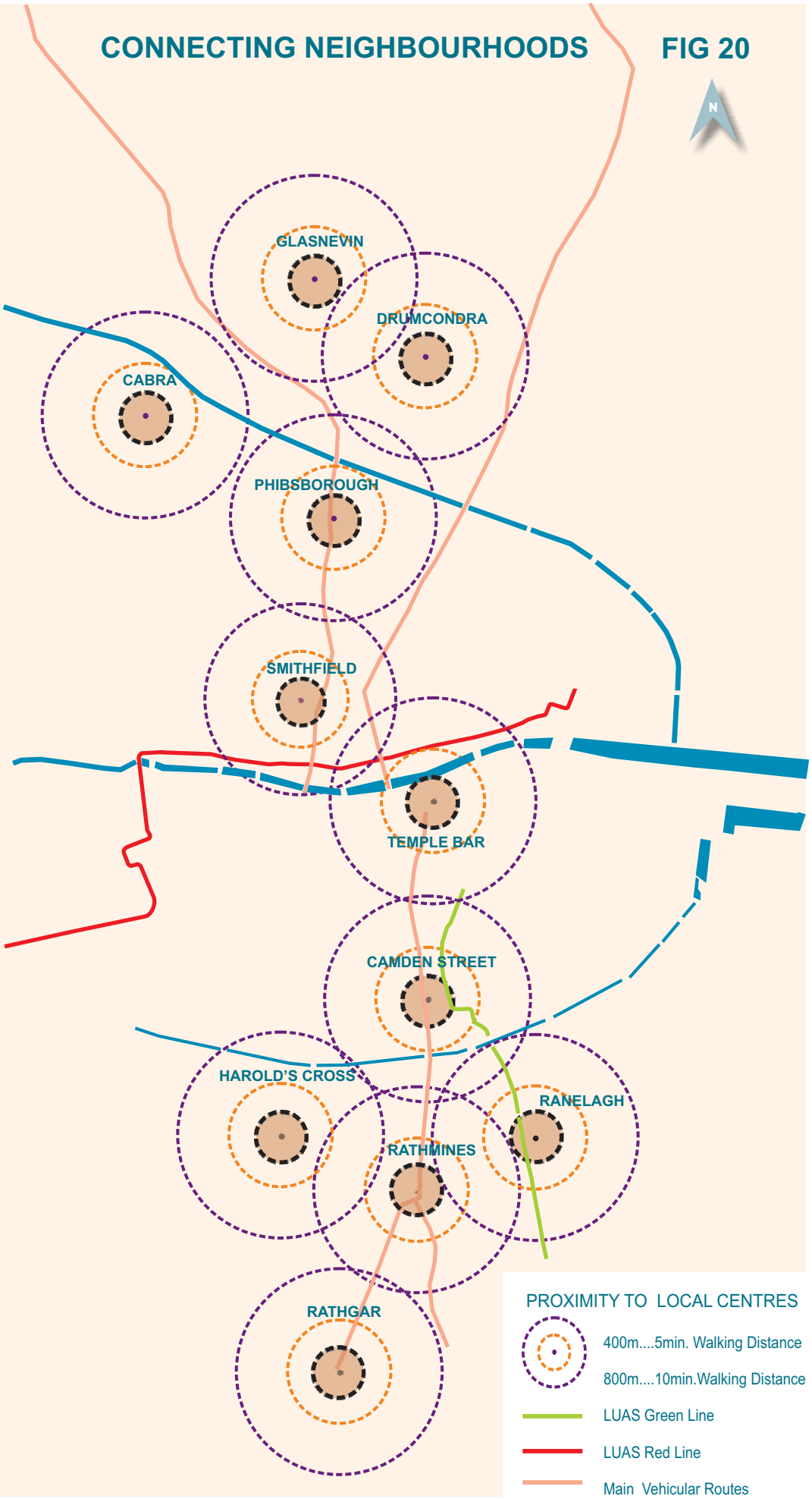
CHAPTER 12

CREATING GOOD NEIGHBOURHOODS AND SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITIES


CONNECTING NEIGHBOURHOODS
FIG 20
N
GLASNEVIN
DRUMCONDRA
CABRA
PHIBSBOROUGH
SMITHFIELD
TEMPLE BAR
CAMDEN STREET
HAROLD'S CROSS
RANELAGH
RATHMINES
RATHGAR
PROXIMITY TO LOCAL CENTRES
400m....5min. Walking Distance
800m....10min.Walking Distance
LUAS Green Line
LUAS Red Line
Main Vehicular Routes

MAKING GOOD NEIGHBOURHOODS & SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITIES

All neighbourhoods serve a local community, while some are also home to national landmarks and institutions. Irrespective of the unique and varying characteristics, a common theme across the city is that good neighbourhoods serve as focal points for the surrounding community with a range of services and facilities, typically in a vibrant and attractive physical environment. The inherent strength of a good neighbourhood is that it is small enough to engender a sense of belonging and community with opportunities for chance encounters and casual meet-and-greets between people about their daily activities. The real value of any neighbourhood is its community with people, individually and collectively, being the city's strongest asset.

This chapter defines the essence of a good urban neighbourhood in order to strengthen existing neighbourhoods throughout the city and to emulate the qualities of good neighbourhoods in the newly emerging developing areas.

12.1 ACHIEVEMENTS

Progress has been made in recent years with the significant improvements in the residential amenity and urban design quality of developments, with new mixed-use, family-friendly neighbourhoods and communities emerging in areas such as Ballymun, Pelletstown and North Fringe. These areas have good public transport connections and shopping, leisure, employment and amenities that are continuing to grow, making them attractive for people at all stages of their lives.

Community and social facilities, such as the Ballyfermot Leisure, Youth & Community Centre, St. Anne's Park and the redevelopment of Rathmines Swimming Pool have been developed in recent years. On a smaller scale, a number of new playgrounds in parks and residential areas have been provided throughout the city. There has been a greater emphasis on the provision of arts and cultural facilities such as The Lab in the Inner City and the Red Stables in St. Anne's Park. Meanwhile, the provision of community facilities, amenities and open spaces have been key considerations in the approach to neighbourhood development in all local plans.

12.2 CHALLENGES

Creating sustainable neighbourhoods requires higher densities that make the necessary facilities and services viable, and good public transport connections. All of this should be within walking distance of residents and workers. These sustainable density levels must also incorporate quality living spaces, amenity areas and green infrastructure, as well as fostering a distinctive sense of place and a safe environment.

The provision of a range of facilities and services to cater for all, such as schools, care centres, cultural spaces and transport, involves a number of agencies and will require an inter-agency response to ensure the timely provision of such social infrastructure. It will also be essential to ensure the optimum use of community facilities and services between neighbourhoods and communities throughout the city.

The National Spatial Strategy (2002-2020), identifies the potential for enhancement of quality of life, through integrating the provision of social infrastructure with policies that affect where people live and work, whilst the DoEHLG has recently produced a suite of best-practice guidance on urban planning and neighbourhood development.

Dublin City Council strategies especially relevant to good neighbourhood making include, inter alia, the City Development Board's – A City of Possibilities and its Action Plan; Towards Integration-A City Framework; Social Inclusion Strategy; Childcare Policy; the Play Plan; and the Sports & Recreation Strategy. The integrated delivery of these policies together with the Development Plan's policies is a challenge for the future.

12.3 THE STRATEGIC APPROACH (See Fig. 20)

The new approach builds on the significant recent improvements in residential amenity and urban design quality of developments and;

- Extends the focus beyond the residential unit and the scheme with an equal emphasis on the quality of the surrounding area
- Defines the essence of a good urban neighbourhood and sets out a series of principles for the making of sustainable neighbourhoods
- Places an emphasis on delivering supporting infrastructure with particular focus on of the value of social infrastructure for sustaining and supporting real communities
- Focuses on creating a network of sustainable communities throughout the city

12.4 POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

12.4.1 A Good Urban Neighbourhood

The urban neighbourhood in Dublin should be big enough to support a range of services and small enough to foster a sense of belonging and community; it should be sufficiently dense to enable all of its essential facilities to be within easy walking distance of the urban centre.

The Government's Ministerial Guidelines, 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, 2009 offers the most recent guidance with criteria on planning for sustainable neighbourhoods under four main themes, namely, provision of community facilities, efficient use of resources, amenity or quality of life issues and conservation of the built and natural environment.

It is the policy of Dublin City Council:

NC1 To promote good urban neighbourhoods throughout the city which are well designed, safe and suitable for a variety of age groups and tenures, robust, adaptable, well served by local facilities and public transport, and which contribute to the structure and identity of the city, consistent with standards set out in this Plan

NC2 To promote neighbourhood developments which build on local character as expressed in historic activities or buildings, materials, housing types or local landscape to harmonise with and further develop the unique character of these places in the wider Dublin context

NC3 To recognise the important role that community groups play in the city and to engage with consultative forums which are inclusive of all age groups

12.4.2 Making Sustainable Neighbourhoods

New developments should contribute to the unique identities and sense of place in Dublin's neighbourhoods. There will be a requirement for all proposals to demonstrate a positive urban design response. Applications for large-scale proposals will need to include an Urban Design Statement (See Chapter 17 Development Standards: Making Sustainable Neighbourhoods).

Where communal open or amenity spaces are provided within residential developments in accordance with the requirements of Providing Quality Homes in a Compact City, they should be designed to be clearly distinct from fully public spaces. Their scale and activities should also be considered so as to fit within the local network of planned or existing public spaces.

The recently published *Urban Design Manual* (DoEHLG 2009) sets out a series of non-prescriptive questions which should be considered during the key stages of the design and planning process. Submissions for proposals for the design of buildings, public realm or infrastructure should demonstrate how the layout of the proposals have addressed the principles of the "Neighbourhood Section" of the Urban Design Manual.

It is the policy of Dublin City Council:

NC4 To have regard to the DoEHLG's Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas and its accompanying Urban Design Manual, 2009 in the making of sustainable neighbourhoods

12.4.3 Neighbourhoods and Supporting Infrastructure

The importance of supporting infrastructure to underpin the making of successful neighbourhoods is recognised at national level with the DoEHLG's Developing Areas Initiative, 2007. This initiative aims at providing a holistic and partnership approach to the integrated delivery of both hard and soft infrastructure, such as water and wastewater services, roads and public transport, schools and sports and community facilities. It identifies key physical and social infrastructure determinants and seeks the integration between the provision of housing and essential supporting community and social infrastructure.

The Ministerial Guidelines, 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas' (2008) reinforces the central objectives of the Developing Areas Initiative. Dublin City Council will use development management phasing mechanisms positively and will liaise with relevant stakeholders and agencies to secure strategic infrastructure in the Key Developing Areas as identified in the Core Strategy.

It is the policy of Dublin City Council:

NC5 To ensure that applications for significant large new developments (over 200 Units) are accompanied by an Implementation and Phasing Programme in relation to community infrastructure, so that such facilities are provided in a timely and co-ordinated fashion

NC6 To support and encourage the future growth of a wide range of public, social and community services essential to local community life

NC7 To promote and seek to provide multi-use, fit-for-purpose, community facilities which are suitable for all ages and all abilities, are operated according to an effective management strategy, and which are accessible in terms of physical design, location, cost of use, and opening hours

NC8 To continue to liaise and support other statutory, voluntary and community groups in the provision of key services.

12.4.4 Schools and Educational Facilities

Dublin City Council will actively assist and liaise with the Department of Education and Science (DES) in relation to the provision of schools with particular regard to forecasting demand and the timely identification of suitable sites and phasing arrangements. The potential for sharing of facilities either between schools or with public open spaces and community facilities will also be pursued with the DES. Dublin City Council will also have regard to the DES & DoEHLG's Code of Practice on the Provision of Schools.

It is the policy of Dublin City Council:

NC9 To facilitate the provision of new schools, school extensions and third level institutions and to have regard to the provisions of the DoEHLG & DES Joint Code of Practice on Planning and the Provision of Schools (2008).

NC10 To seek to reserve lands for educational purposes in locations close to the areas of greatest residential expansion and adjacent to community developments such as community centres, playing fields, libraries etc. so that the possibility of sharing facilities can be maximised in accordance with the Department of Education & Science's Joint Code of Practice (2008)

NC11 To facilitate the provision of college and other educational sites in accordance with the requirements of the relevant education authorities and encourage the shared use of school grounds and facilities –including sports facilities and equipment– with the local community, outside of core school hours.

NC12 To facilitate the provision of continuing educational facilities which provide for lifelong learning for all, including the elderly

It is an objective of Dublin City Council:

NCO1 To liaise with the Department of Education and Science and other community interests in the preparation of a report on the educational needs of the city

12.4.5 Sustainable Provision and Optimum Use of Social Infrastructure

A key aspect in the sustainable provision of social infrastructure is to ensure optimum use of community facilities in both emerging and existing neighbourhoods throughout the city and also key regeneration areas. This means that the provision of strategic new infrastructure should complement the range of neighbouring facilities already existing in the vicinity.

It is the policy of Dublin City Council:

NC13 To support the provision of community facilities which act as point of integration between residents of new and established communities within neighbourhoods

NC14 To seek to provide and to promote the provision and further development of community facilities throughout the city

12.4.6 Social Audits and the Provision of Social Infrastructure

Large-scale residential and/or mixed-use schemes, typically 200 units or 200,000m^2 depending on local circumstances, must be accompanied by an audit of existing facilities in the area. This audit must show how the proposal will contribute to the range of supporting community infrastructure and how it will deliver a key social infrastructure element.

Key social infrastructure elements may include the following category types, as defined by the Government's Developing Areas Initiative, 2007: Educational and Childcare Facilities; Community and Social Facilities; Passive Amenity & Open Space and Local Retail.

All proposals should have regard to the guidance on planning for sustainable neighbourhoods set out in the DoEHLG's Planning Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009).

Proposals in excess of 200 dwelling units must be accompanied by an assessment of the capacity of local schools to accommodate the proposed development in accordance with the above guidelines and the DES & DEHLG's Code of Practice on the Provision of Schools and the Planning System (2008).

It is the policy of Dublin City Council:

NC15 To facilitate the provision in suitable locations of sustainable, fit-for-purpose childcare facilities in residential, employment, and educational settings, taking into account the existing provision of childcare facilities and emerging demographic trends in an area

NC16 To encourage and facilitate the provision of a range of community facilities in the city that cater for all

NC17 To enhance and improve the provision of playgrounds, play spaces and recreational spaces in residential areas and in the city centre in accordance with the City Council's standards and guidelines

NC18 To promote the development of both indoor and outdoor facilities for young people e.g. multi-use games areas (MUGAs), teenage shelters, skateboarding areas and skateboard parks, youth cafes, youth centres

NC19 To facilitate the development or expansion and improvement of hospitals, community based healthcare facilities, respite homes and day care centres for the elderly in residential areas

It is an objective of Dublin City Council:

NCO2 To investigate the opportunities, in consultation with young people, to provide for challenging play opportunities which provide a wide variety of play experiences and where possible allow access to the natural environment

12.4.7 Social Inclusion and Regeneration

Social inclusion is important in creating sustainable neighbourhoods. The regeneration of areas of the city with poor quality environments and connecting developing areas into the fabric of the city are vital to this. The promotion of inclusive neighbourhoods that cater for all age groups, that accord with the principles of universal design and that offer quality of opportunity and good services to all will be a priority.

It is the policy of Dublin City Council:

NC20 To support urban regeneration in areas across the city in order to enhance social cohesion and potential for positive change in traditionally marginal areas

NC21 To facilitate the balanced provision of social support services and avoid the proliferation of such facilities in any one part of the city

NC22 To support immigrant communities in relation to their social, cultural and community needs in an integrated manner through the implementation of Dublin City Council's Towards Integration: A City Framework

NC23 To promote built environments and outdoor shared spaces which are accessible to all. Such developments must be in accordance with the principles of Universal Design, the City Development Plan's Access For All Standards, and the National Disability Authority's '*Building For Everyone'* publication

It is an objective of Dublin City Council:

NCO3 To have regard, in the preparation of local level plans, to the City Development Board's 'Mapping of Social Inclusion Data', where such data is relevant and up-to-date data is made available to Dublin City Council.