

CHAPTER 2

CONTEXT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

CONTEXT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2011 – 2017

The Dublin City Development Plan (2011 – 2017) provides a coherent spatial framework for the delivery of sustainable development to ensure an improved quality of life for its citizens. Following fifteen years of unprecedented growth, which has transformed the city, the recent economic downturn must be grasped as an opportunity to create a shared vision for a long term recovery, for the benefit of the city, the region and the country.

The new City Development Plan will operate in a very different context from that which prevailed when the last Development Plan was adopted in 2005. At that time the city had seen a major expansion in its urban renewal programme supported by strong economic activity and high demand for new residential development allied to a wide range of critical new infrastructure including the Luas and the Port Tunnel.

The last development plan resulted in considerable achievements for the city. With the aid of the strong economy up to 2008, new quarters and clusters have emerged in Heuston and the Docklands, extending the inner city to the east and west. New civic spaces, such as O'Connell Street and Grand Canal Dock, have all enhanced the city. In the outer city, extensive new mixed-use neighbourhoods have been created at Pelletstown, North Fringe and Ballymun. In addition the City Council has engaged with communities in the making of a number of plans, such as the Liberties and Phibsborough Local Area Plans.

While much has been delivered, it is also recognised that the pace of new development has resulted in a degree of fragmentation and, in some cases; communities feel they have been left behind.

2.1 A New Approach (See Fig 1)

This Development Plan sets out a new approach to meet the needs and aspirations of the citizens of Dublin and the country in the long term. This approach is based on the principles of sustainability and thematic integration. The philosophy imbues the Development Plan throughout, including the vision, core strategies, policies, objectives, zoning and implementation.

This philosophy for the future planning of the city has evolved over recent years and takes on board global and national concerns, together with inputs from the Development Plan consultation process. At global level, there is increasing concern about climate change, carbon emissions, and depletion of the earth's resources. At national level, the Climate Change Strategy has been introduced. Dublin City Council has taken a number of initiatives such as the Climate Strategy for Dublin City, which sets out a series of actions to reduce the city's carbon footprint. The city is also at the forefront in flood management.

Secondly, the extensive consultation with the public, Strategic Policy Committees and sectoral groups which took place throughout the city as part of the preparation of this Development Plan, revealed a desire and an appetite to ensure that Dublin becomes a quality, clean, green and accessible city, supporting a creative, smart economy and good, thriving, whole-life neighbourhoods.

It is from the above processes that the overarching philosophy for this Development Plan period and beyond has begun to emerge. The following paragraphs describe briefly the two prongs of the philosophy which inform the Vision and the Core Strategy in the Plan.

2.2 The Six Themes

The City Council has identified six broad themes which are integral to the future growth and development of the city. The application of the themes at all levels, from Plan making to urban projects and development management will help to deliver a better quality of life for all. The six themes constitute inter-related and essential elements of a sustainable approach to future development of the city.

The six themes are:

1. Economic – Developing Dublin City as the heart of the Dublin region and the engine of the Irish economy with a network of thriving spatial and sectoral clusters, a focus for creative talent and creative assets
2. Social – Developing Dublin City as a compact city with a network of sustainable neighbourhoods which have a range of facilities and a choice of tenure and house types, promoting social inclusion and integration of all ethnic communities
3. Cultural – Making provision for cultural facilities throughout the city and increase awareness of our cultural heritage and promoting safe and active streets through design of buildings and the public realm
4. Urban Form and Spatial – Creating a connected and legible city based on active streets and quality public spaces with a distinctive sense of place
5. Movement – Helping to build an integrated transport network and encouraging the provision of greater choice of transport. Planning and zoning objectives will be brought together to increase the opportunities to live and work close to transport hubs and corridors
6. Environmental – Providing for an overall framework involving key principles, strategies and objectives to drive a vision of ‘Sustainable Dublin’ over the next 25 to 30 years, making sure that buildings can adapt to changing needs and encouraging better waste management strategies

In recent times, and during the consultation on this Plan, the last theme relating to sustainability has become increasingly important and is seen as critical to the city’s future growth and success. It forms the second prong of the overarching philosophy.

2.3 Sustainable Dublin

Dublin must now make the transition to a low-carbon sustainable city. The evidence and costly implications of not doing so are indisputable and the benefits of a more sustainable city are numerous. Dublin has made some good progress, but the scale of the challenge is such that there is a need for a coherent and strategic response.

The Framework for Sustainable Dublin (FSD) has been developed as a way of thinking and as a tool to tackle the challenge of climate change and to understand, guide and plan the progress towards a sustainable society for Dublin. The FSD offers the strategic approach needed to guide plans from the systems to the action level. The first and most fundamental step in this approach is the creation of a shared vision of success with an emphasis on community engagement and open governance that is meaningful to individuals and communities across the city. This approach, which is fundamental to the city’s progress on sustainability, is elaborated upon in the Implementation Section (See chapter 13).

Why Sustainable Dublin?

There are compelling reasons for making Dublin a Sustainable City. A shift in behavioural patterns, renewable energy sources and sustainable infrastructure is critical for the city to make its contribution to emissions reductions and to increase the resilience of the city’s economy. There is also a strong economic case for climate change mitigation. The Stern Review (2006) for instance, states that the cost of inaction is far greater than the cost of early action. Dublin must make the transition to a low-carbon and ultimately a post-carbon economy to become a competitive, resilient and sustainable city.

The alternative is to continue along an unsustainable path of low-density development with extensive urban sprawl, unsustainable travel patterns, high levels of fossil fuel consumption and a reliance on imported energy sources. This unsustainable path will undoubtedly result in costly penalties for late or non-compliance on climate change commitments, irreparable damage to the city's image and branding as a clean, green, knowledge economy and will impede the ability of the city to become a centre of innovation and creativity. It will also increase the likelihood of strategic risks in terms of the city's vulnerability to uncertainties in global energy supplies and the impacts of extreme weather events due to climate change. This alternative is simply not a viable option for Dublin.

These components of the overarching philosophy for the new Development Plan have informed the Vision and the Core Strategy for the City, both of which are elaborated upon in the Development Strategy to 2017 in the next section.