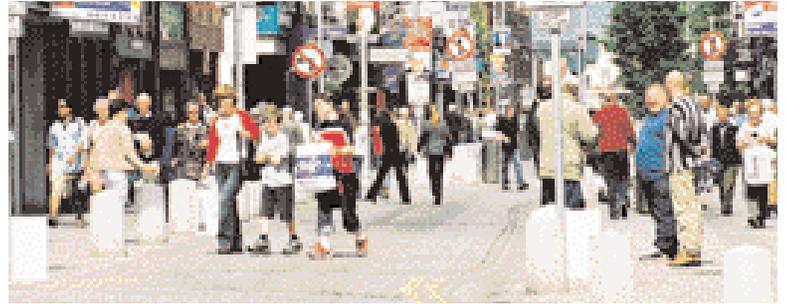


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Vision for the County

To plan for and co-ordinate appropriate sustainable development in Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown based on high quality residential, working and recreational environments and sustainable transportation patterns. To create a high-quality physical environment to meet the growing needs of those living, working or visiting the County in a sustainable, inclusive, balanced and integrated way and where communities can thrive in an ecologically, socially and economically sustainable manner.

The County Development Board produced a shared vision for the County at 2012, namely *a county which has created processes and frameworks that will enable the improvement in the overall quality of life for everyone, living in, working in or visiting Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown, in a sustainable, inclusive, balanced and integrated manner, that reflects the needs of an increasingly diverse population and its traditions and cultures and that Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown will have developed into a society facilitating the flourishing of the individual at all stages of life, active in and supported by thriving communities, through a spirit of genuine partnership and active citizenship.*

The County Development Board's *An Integrated Strategy for Social, Economic and Cultural Development 2002-2012* is the ten-year strategy that will achieve this vision. The County Development Board correctly points out that the management and protection of the environment is critical to development within all three core strands of social, economic and cultural development. The County Development Plan 2004-2010 will play a key part in this task.

2.1 Context

National Spatial Strategy 2002 –2020 People, Places and Potential

2.1.1 Introduction

The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) is a 20-year planning framework designed to deliver more balanced social, economic and physical development between regions. Its

focus is on people, on places and on building communities. The Strategy is a national framework, it is spatial in that it is concerned with where people live and work and it is strategic, giving a 20-year view.

Balanced regional development requires that the full potential of each region to contribute to the overall performance of the State be developed – on a sustainable economic, social and environmental basis.

The Strategy sets out how all areas of the country will have the opportunity to develop to their potential and important elements relevant to this County include:

2.1.2 Dublin

The National Development Plan 2000-2006 identified Dublin as a 'gateway' or an engine of regional and national growth. The NSS recognises that much of Ireland's recent prosperity has been generated in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) and that the performance of the GDA will remain pivotal to the overall economic well being of Ireland. The Greater Dublin Area comprises Dublin City, and the Counties of Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal, Kildare, Meath, South Dublin and Wicklow. Dublin City and the surrounding three Dublin counties account for 38.9% of the national total of Gross Value Added (GVA). The GDA accounted for 47.9% of GVA national total in 1999.

But there is recognition that the form of development in the GDA has created acute pressures in areas like housing supply and traffic congestion. Dublin is becoming a dispersed city with workers commuting up to 80 kms. The GDA grew by over 185,000 persons in the 11 years from 1991. Continuing population growth in the GDA will require planning and infrastructure responses based on a strategic approach that seeks to manage population growth more effectively.

The fundamental approach to the NSS is to encourage greater spatial balance by strengthening areas and places in a structured way, rather than seeking to stop growth in Dublin. The most realistic objective for the NSS is to seek to establish a position in which the regional components of the country grow at a broadly similar pace, rather than seeking



unrealistic shifts between regions in their proportionate shares of population.

2.1.3 Population in the GDA

In 2002 the GDA contained 39.2% of the State's population, but in the years leading up to 2002 population growth was lower than expected, possibly due to restrictions in housing supply, rising house prices and more affordable houses becoming available at longer distances from Dublin. As housing demand and supply achieve equilibrium, due to Local Authority Housing Strategies and increased densities, a pattern of stronger population growth in the GDA is likely to occur.

The NSS report states that population growth in the GDA is driven primarily by the dynamics of natural increase and high in-migration rates combined with a very high proportion of new jobs and investment. This is not the case in Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County which cannot retain its natural increase and has net out-migration.

In the National Spatial Strategy the population of the GDA is expected to grow from 1.535 million persons in 2002 to 1.938 million persons at 2020. Over 400,000 persons still need to be accommodated in the GDA over this period.

Average national household size is expected to be 2.63 by 2011. A supply of high quality and affordable housing will be necessary in urban areas designated as 'gateways' and 'hubs'. Local authorities in responding to additional housing needs must do so in a way that supports good planning practice. Such practice would include strengthening and sustaining existing settlements by focusing on their centres and then moving outwards as necessary in a planned way by identifying new development opportunities.

2.1.4 Consolidating the GDA

It is essential to the NSS that the performance of the economy of the GDA and surrounding counties is built upon so that its success, competitiveness and national role are sustained into the future. Dublin will continue to grow in population and output terms. However, it is not desirable for

the city to continue to spread physically into the surrounding counties. The physical consolidation of Dublin, supported by effective land use policies for the urban area itself, is an essential requirement for a competitive Dublin. Consolidation is also required for the public transport system to function effectively. In turn, investment in public transport will assist in promoting a more efficient and competitive GDA.

Local Authorities should:

- Seek opportunities for infill housing in older suburbs which are losing population.
- Provide for down-sizing.
- Encourage urban design plans for renewal areas.
- Examine the potential of declining industrial and warehouse areas for redevelopment for new economic activity.
- Vigorously promote 'Living over the Shop' schemes.
- Use powers under the Derelict Sites Act, 1991.

Key considerations for consolidating the GDA are:

- Effective integration of land use and transportation policy within the spatial structure of the GDA.
- Facilitating the national roles of Dublin Airport and Dublin Port.
- Supporting the city region's capacity for innovation.
- Facilitating ease of movement of people and goods within the GDA, particularly through an effective public transport system.
- Maintaining a high quality environment within the area.
- Clarifying the role of other urban areas within and at or near the edges of the GDA.

2.1.5 A Green Structure

The NSS sets out a policy on environmental quality. In the consolidation of the Dublin gateway, the prime consideration is to maintain the distinction between the city, the towns and the countryside, to prevent the further erosion of the respective advantages of both rural and urban areas. This can be expressed as putting in place, through regional and county level plans and strategies, a *Green Structure*,



the objectives of which would be:

- To prevent urban sprawl.
- To reduce the loss of agricultural and other land to urban uses.
- To protect rural identity and reduce disruption to farming by keeping rural-urban distinctions as clear as possible.
- To create a green setting for cities and towns which will provide people with opportunities for outdoor recreation within easy reach.
- To conserve and, where appropriate and possible, enhance biodiversity.
- To protect buildings, structures and other physical elements of the cultural heritage.

2.1.6 Implementation

Implementation of the NSS will be through Regional Planning Guidelines which cover a period of 12 years with a 6-year review. The provisions of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 require that the NSS be integrated with Regional Planning Guidelines and County Development Plans. Development Plans must demonstrate consistency with the NSS.

Integrated spatial development frameworks for the gateways will be adopted and promoted. Local authorities have primary responsibility for driving the preparation of these frameworks and translating their provisions into statutory Development Plans.

2.2 Strategic Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area, 1999 and annual Review and Update for 2000, 2001 and 2002 *

Strategic Planning Guidelines were prepared for the Greater Dublin Area in March, 1999 (updated and reviewed in 2000, 2001 and 2002). The principle objective of the Guidelines is the provision of a broad planning framework for the Region, giving an overall strategic context to the development plans of each local authority. They provide a framework for the future investment in transportation, sanitary services and other infrastructure, and a sustainable settlement pattern for the area as a whole.

The report highlights the anticipated level of growth in population in the Greater Dublin Area from the 1996 figure of 1.4 million persons accommodated in approximately 450,000 households to 1.76 million persons accommodated in approximately 705,800 households in 2011.

The Guidelines propose the following vision for the Region:

In the future the Greater Dublin Area will have a much improved transportation system, with a better balance between public and private transportation. A sustainable settlement strategy will offer choice in terms of residential and employment location and create a clearer demarcation between urban and rural areas.

This Development Plan incorporates many of the policies and recommendations of the Guidelines and fully supports the strategy contained in the Guidelines, particularly the need to consolidate growth in the Metropolitan Area.

The following are the main implications of the *Strategic Planning Guidelines* for Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County:

- Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown falls within the Metropolitan Area for which the SPG objective seeks to consolidate.
- The County has major transport corridors traversing it – the N11 QBC, Rathfarnham QBC, the DART and the proposed LUAS/Metro, the strategy considers these corridors to be vital for future growth.
- Blackrock, Dundrum and Dun Laoghaire are identified as the urban nodes with potential to grow as important development centres due to their location in regard to the public transport network, comparison shopping facilities, employment and services provision.
- The *Strategic Planning Guidelines* require that the Southern Port Access Route (Eastern By-Pass) be re-examined.



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2.3 Dublin Transportation Office Platform for Change Strategy 2000-2016

This document sets out the Dublin Transportation Office (DTO) strategy for transport planning in the GDA up to 2016. *The Strategic Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area* are the fundamental basis on which the DTO Strategy rests.

The vision for Dublin that the DTO Strategy sets out to achieve is:

- A city and region that embraces the principles of sustainability.
- A leading European city, proud of its heritage and looking to the future.
- A strong, competitive, dynamic and sustainable region.
- A living city and region, on a human scale, accessible to all and providing a good quality of life for its citizens.

The DTO Strategy seeks to transform the transportation system in the Greater Dublin Area. It envisages that there will be extensive, high quality, fully accessible, integrated networks for DART/ Suburban rail, LUAS, METRO, bus, roads, cycling and walking. Strategic, but limited improvements to the road network are endorsed, including the completion of the orbital motorway around Dublin and the Eastern By-Pass. The Strategy incorporates traffic management policies and good quality cycle and pedestrian networks.

The Strategy is designed to consolidate growth in the metropolitan area, sustain economic development and regeneration throughout the region and to foster sustainable development.

2.4 Sustainable Development

It is the policy of Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council that the principles of sustainable development will inform all objectives, policies, decisions and actions of the County Council for the period of the Plan.

It is recognised that sustainable development has an economic, social and cultural dimension as well as an

environmental one, and that only the integration of these policies can guarantee the quality of life of this and future generations.

Sustainable development is defined as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

Protection of the built and natural environment is a fundamental element of sustainability. However, the concept is much broader than this, recognising that the quality of life for present and future generations is directly dependent on the long-term health and integrity of the environment. To achieve this, new development should respect and complement the existing built character of the environment, urban or rural, into which it is placed.

While sustainability cannot be achieved solely through the planning process, land use policy and controls are central to the achievement of sustainability. The Development Plan, as the Council’s principal policy statement on land use, has been drawn-up to reflect sustainable development objectives.

Four main objectives of sustainable development have been identified and the policies and proposals of the Plan are designed to facilitate their achievement:-

(a) Conserve Finite Resources

Minimise the consumption of natural non-renewable resources, including land.

(b) Protect Local Capital

Protect the quality of the landscape, open space, architectural and cultural heritage and material assets.

(c) Minimise the Adverse Impact of Development

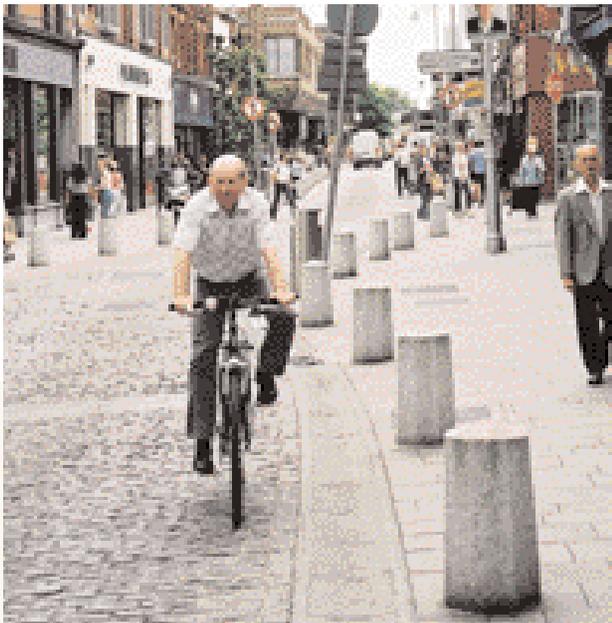
Protect the integrity of the built and natural environments from damage caused by insensitive development proposals.

(d) Involve the Local Community

Promote the involvement of the local community in decision- making on environmental sustainability issues.

While the achievement of these objectives will involve all areas of the Council’s activities, in land use terms they are





reflected in the Development Plan by the adoption of policies and proposals which:

- Promote a more sustainable compact urban form, particularly higher residential densities and locating employment in the vicinity of strategic public transport corridors.
- Develop and expand the existing centres and nodes, especially those that are public transport interchanges, to minimise car travel.
- Promote the use of public transport, cycling and walking and reduce reliance on private car usage and reduce car parking demand.
- Permit a wide range of land uses under each zoning objective (compatible with protecting existing amenities), to help reduce the need to travel and to reduce travel distance and time.
- Ensure a broad mix of zones throughout the County to facilitate a balance of housing, jobs and facilities.
- Conserve existing urban areas, buildings and features of high environmental quality.
- Strictly control the further expansion of the suburbs into rural and high amenity areas by using all the land in the urban areas in a highly sustainable manner.
- Ensure that construction design is of a high quality and appropriate to the scale and content of its surroundings.
- Only allow the expansion of development in the urban/rural fringe in accordance with local plans based on sustainability principles.
- Promote the active involvement of the community through provision of information, public consultation and joint partnerships.
- Conduct its business, particularly the decision making process, in a transparent and accountable manner.
- Ensure that timely and independent Environmental

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Impact Studies are conducted prior to the finalisation of Action Plans.

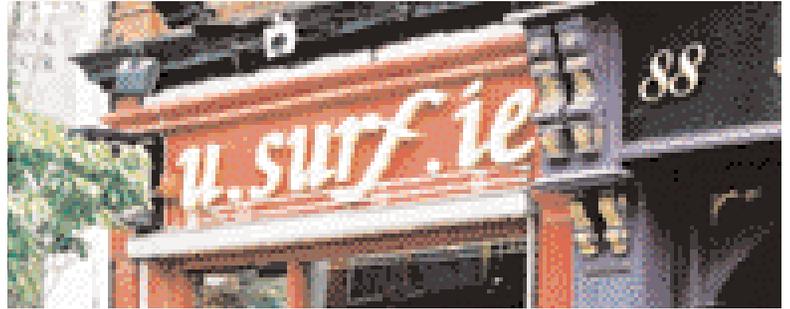
- Promote the re-use of urban derelict land, buildings, fixtures and discarded detail.
- Ensure the protection of natural habitats, maritime environment, cultural heritage, ecological resources and quality landscapes and the promotion of biodiversity.
- Promote cost effective provision of public services like roads, drainage, waste management facilities, lighting, public amenities and schools.
- Promote social inclusion to ensure an improved quality of life for all.
- Contribute to the evolution of socially integrated communities in both urban and rural areas.
- Minimise the consumption of non-renewable resources like soils, groundwater and agricultural land.
- Promote community health.
- Ensure the provision of high quality public water supply and drainage systems.
- Promote waste prevention, waste reduction, waste recycling and waste re-use. Limit waste disposal.

Sustainable development is a long-term objective which can only be achieved by degrees over time. The Development Plan represents a step towards sustainability and forms a part of the Council's overall strategy. Sustainable development can only be achieved with joint public and private sector action and with the acceptance and support of the community. The Council is only one of many participants in the process.

Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council has produced *Guidelines for Sustainable Development (1999)* which assists developers in the achievement of sustainability in new developments.

2.5 Main Planning Goals

Section 10 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 states that a Development Plan shall "set out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and shall consist of a written statement and a plan or plans indicating the development objectives for the area".



In developing a strategy for the future planning and development of the County it is recognised that Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown is only one part of the Dublin Metropolitan Area. The County will be influenced by, and have influence over future economic, social and environmental trends in the Region. The Development Plan should give expression to the needs and requirements of residents of the County at the local level. In addition, it should recognise the regional dimension of the County.

The main planning goals that underpin the overall strategy are:

1) To provide for the future well being of the residents of the County by:

- Providing sufficient housing land.
- Providing an adequate supply of zoned lands to meet anticipated development needs.
- Facilitating the growth of employment opportunities in all sectors.
- Protecting the quality of the built and natural environments.
- Ensuring the provision of the necessary social and physical infrastructural services.
- Promoting sustainable transportation patterns.

2) To promote the achievement of sustainable development. This will involve the encouragement of high quality infill residential development which will consolidate the existing urban/suburban form.

2.6 Overall Strategy

The overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the County is to create a polycentric settlement pattern – by developing and expanding the existing towns, district centres and villages in the urban area. The County Development Board in its ten-year strategy has identified the County as a “county of villages”. This is supported in the County Development Plan. In the urban areas it is policy to channel development into centres served by public transport. Nodes with good interchange facilities will be developed for residential, commercial and

employment opportunities.

The nodes or centres are for the most part embedded in the existing urbanised area. They are generally easily accessible and each has its own particular catchment. The nodes are of varying sizes ranging from Dundrum and Dun Laoghaire at the top to smaller centres and villages such as Dalkey, Ballybrack and Goatstown at the other end of the scale. Where no nodes exist or where there is a gap in the urban structure then a new node will be required. There are four primary nodes for significant urban development – two of these are the major towns of Dun Laoghaire and Dundrum, the third is Bray Environs on the southern boundary and the fourth will be Cherrywood-Rathmichael. The first three will be the focus for Integrated Framework Plans for Land Use and Transportation (IFPLUT) to be carried out in co-operation with the Dublin Transportation Office. The fourth is the Cherrywood-Rathmichael Area – the area with the greatest potential as a Special Development Area.

2.7 Main Elements

The Overall Strategy for Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown incorporates the following elements:

- To achieve high density development along public transport corridors.
- To at least retain the natural increase (excess of births over deaths) of the County’s population in the County and not to have net migration from the County.
- To retain existing population levels in existing built up areas and to increase them where feasible.
- To construct sufficient affordable residential units in the County to accommodate the natural increase in the County’s population by zoning sufficient land to accomplish this and by encouraging appropriate ‘infill’ development.
- To limit the encroachment of the urban area into the rural area as much as possible through infill, recycling brown field sites and using redundant institutional lands intensively.
- To ensure an adequate supply of zoned and serviced lands to meet anticipated development needs.



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- To facilitate the growth of employment opportunities, concentrating on high technology and knowledge based industries. New office developments to contain these uses will be encouraged in appropriately zoned areas throughout the County.
- It is the policy of the Council to recapture at least 50% of the lost comparison retail expenditure by way of attracting higher quality retail facilities which respect and adhere to the Retail Hierarchy as set out in the Retail Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area (2001) so as to encourage a higher spend by the existing residents and visitors to the County. Depending on whether a higher or lower growth rate prevails, the Development Plan should not exceed the floor space allocation in the Retail Planning Strategy for the Greater Dublin area, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that growth in retail expenditure to 2011, over and above that set out in the Strategy, warrants additional space.
- To continue to regenerate urban and village centres, provided that such redevelopment respects the existing built form and residential amenity of the area concerned.
- To promote 'living over the shop' schemes.
- To protect the quality of the natural and built environments. Special care will be given to areas of high amenity, upland areas and green belt areas and to protect the open character of the rural areas and to prevent unsuitable development.

2.8 Role of Other Agencies

A great many factors other than the Development Plan have a direct bearing on the future development of the County. There are a large number of agencies apart from the County Council whose decisions and activities have an influence on the County, such as those concerned with public transport (both rail and bus), education, industrial promotion and electricity supply. In addition, operational decisions by the large financial institutions such as banks, building societies and insurance companies can have a significant impact on the functioning of the property market, notwithstanding the policies and objectives of the Plan. Therefore, within the limitations of the statutory planning process, the Development Plan through its policies and objectives, sets the direction for the future development of Dun Laoghaire-

Rathdown. While focusing essentially on matters within its own control, it also attempts to influence the decisions of other agencies whose actions have an impact on the future of the County.

*Mc Garry Ni Éanaigh Architects,
Photo: Barry Mason*

