

# Green County Strategy

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**Vision Statement:** To promote and develop a coherent and integrated green infrastructure network across Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown which will secure and enhance biodiversity - including the protection of Natura 2000 sites - provide readily accessible parks, open spaces and recreational facilities, maintain historic and landscape character areas and provide for the sustainable management of water through facilitating the retention and development of a network of green spaces in urban and countryside locations to serve the needs of all citizens and communities in the County.

# 4.1 Landscape, Heritage and Biodiversity

## 4.1.1. Introduction

The landscape, heritage and biodiversity of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown represent some of the most important intrinsic assets of the County. Indeed, to a great degree they actually define the County. The heritage of the County encompasses built, archaeological, cultural and natural heritage, while the extensive network of public parks and open spaces provide important areas for passive and active recreation as well as key spaces for enhancing biodiversity. The County is framed by its coastal and upland landscapes and the diverse range of landscape character areas 'Between the Mountains and the Sea' testify to the variety of landscapes in what is the smallest administrative County in Ireland.

All of these assets are integral to the County's image, and add greatly to the quality of life for both residents and visitors alike. They set the physical context to the daily experiences of those who live, work and visit Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown. The landscape, cultural heritage and biodiversity of the County also represent valuable economic assets. The effective management of these assets is integral to the future successful development of the County.

In a largely urban area such as Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, matters of landscape, heritage and biodiversity necessarily go hand in hand with the

development of the County. By promoting greater levels of information, communication and imaginative design, however, conflicts can be minimised and it should be possible for the County to continue to grow in vitality whilst retaining its very distinct characteristics.

The Strategic Vision of this Plan in relation to Landscape, Heritage and Biodiversity must recognise and address the following key issues facing the County:

- Balancing the needs of the built, archaeological, cultural and natural heritage of the County with the legitimate need to continue to develop Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County in a positive and sustainable manner.
- Increasing awareness among all sections of the population of the importance of the County's landscape, cultural heritage and biodiversity.
- The formulation of appropriate and considered policies for the protection, enhancement and management of the heritage of the County while recognising that this heritage is not a static entity but is constantly evolving and changing.
- Recognising that landscape is the overall key facet which forms the 'glue' binding all areas of heritage and to fully integrate environmental considerations into other Development Plan policies to ensure cross compliance of the Plan.



- Ensuring that the County’s Heritage Plan 2013 – 2019, ‘Contributing Towards Quality of Life’ and the County’s Biodiversity Plan 2009 – 2013 ‘Treasuring our Wildlife’ are implemented and that succession plans are put in place at the appropriate time.
- Recognising the close relationship between the landscape, natural heritage and recreational open spaces. The distribution of landscape, natural heritage and recreational assets across the County are vitally important to creating an accessible County. The entire population of the County should have access to nature, parks and strategic public open space.
- The creation of a ‘Green Infrastructure Strategy’ to help manage the future landscape of the County giving due regard to recreation, biodiversity, built and archaeological heritage.
- Recognising the challenges of climate change and its impact on biodiversity and the consequent resultant requirement to adapt to climate change positively (climate change adaptation).
- Ensuring full compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.
- Providing places for local food production - in allotments, gardens and through agriculture.
- Improved health and well-being by raising the quality of the County’s citizens living and working environment.
- Assisting in ‘place-making’, by positively recognising and maintaining the character of particular locations, particularly where new development is planned.
- Enhancing biodiversity.

The creation of a Green Infrastructure Strategy that is intrinsic to, and permeates across every facet of the County, can provide many social, economic and environmental benefits proximate to where people live and work including:

- Providing space and habitats for wildlife and ready access to nature for the populace.
- Providing places for outdoor relaxation and play.
- Providing corridors for walking and cycling.
- Assisting in climate change adaptation - including flood alleviation.
- Increasing environmental education and awareness.



#### 4.1.1.1 Policy LHB 1: Access to Natural Heritage

**It is Council policy to promote, protect and enhance sustainable and appropriate access to the natural heritage of the County.**

#### 4.1.1.2. Appropriate Assessment

**The Council will ensure that any plan/project and any associated works, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, are subject to Appropriate Assessment Screening to ensure there are no likely significant effects on the integrity (defined by the structure and function) of any Natura 2000 site(s) and that the requirements of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive are fully satisfied. Where a plan /project is likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site or where there is uncertainty with regard to effects, it shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment. A Natura Impact Statement (NIS) shall be produced. The plan/project will proceed only after it has been ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site or where, in the absence of alternative solutions, the plan/project is deemed imperative for reasons of overriding public interest, all in accordance with the provisions of the EU Habitats Directive.**

The application of the EU guidance ‘Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 Sites’ and ‘Managing Natura 2000 Sites’ and the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government ‘Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ (2009, revision 2010) is encouraged. The Council is aware that there are a number of projects that are affected by the designation of Dublin Bay SAC and SPA.

This chapter is divided into 3 sub-sections:

- Landscape (including the Coast and the Mountains).
- Biodiversity.
- Heritage.

## 4.1.2 Landscape

### 4.1.2 (i) Landscape

The landscape of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown is a dynamic and living landscape. It is not a static entity but is the outcome of thousands of years of action and interaction between natural and human factors.

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown contains significant areas of landscape importance. The retention and protection of these areas is particularly critical given the established built-up nature of the majority of the County and the continuing pattern of densification and intensification. There is a clear presumption in favour of conserving, maintaining and enhancing the landscape character of the County to enable those living and working within, and those visiting, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown to reap the benefits of the high quality environment and the leisure and recreation amenities which this landscape facilitates and offers.

The Planning and Development Acts, 2000 - 2010 requires that a Development Plan shall include objectives relating to *'... landscape, in accordance with relevant policies or objectives for the time being of the Government relating to providing a framework for identification, assessment, protection, management and planning of landscapes and developed having regard to the European Landscape Convention.'* The European Landscape Convention - also known as the Florence Convention, - promotes the protection, management and planning of European landscapes and organises European co-operation on landscape

issues. The Convention defines landscape as *'an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors'*. As a signatory of the Convention there is an obligation on Ireland to prepare a National Landscape Strategy. In July 2014 the Department of Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht (DoEHLG) duly published 'A Draft National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2014 - 2024' which sets out Ireland's aims and objectives with regard to landscape. The Draft Strategy contains a commitment to preparing an overarching National Landscape Character Assessment that will be followed by the publication of 'Planning Guidelines on Local Landscape Character Assessment'.

#### 4.1.2.1 Policy LHB2: Preservation of Landscape Character Areas\*

**It is Council policy to continue to preserve and enhance the character of the County's landscapes in accordance with the recommended strategies as originally outlined in the Landscape Character Assessment (2002 and since updated), in accordance with the 'Draft Guidelines for Landscape and Landscape Assessment' (2000) as issued by the Department of Environment and Local Government, in accordance with the European Landscape Convention (Florence Convention) and in accordance with 'A National Landscape Strategy for Ireland - Strategy Issue Paper for Consultation' (2011). The Council shall implement any relevant recommendations contained in the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht's National Landscape Strategy for Ireland, 2014 - 2024 as and when it is finalised and published.**

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The Council will take a proactive approach to the landscape with policies that seek to conserve and enhance the strongly distinctive landscape character of the County by protecting landscape elements of significance that are intrinsically important or contribute to the general amenity of the County. Landscape assets are non-renewable resources that the Council will seek to protect.

In 2002, during the preparation of the 2004-2010 County Development Plan, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown carried out a Landscape Character Assessment of the primarily rural areas of the County. This identified 13 Landscape Character Areas - including Cherrywood-Rathmichael - with a recommended strategy for each area. It is considered that the broad thrust of that 2002 Assessment, and the associated strategies, remains reasonably robust. That Assessment was revised and updated as part of the review of the 2010 – 2016 Plan and has subsequently been revised and updated for the purposes of this Plan to take cognisance of any obvious and/or relevant changes in the intervening years. This updated Landscape Character Assessment is attached as Appendix 7.

The extensive south-western rural part of the County focuses primarily around the foothills of the Dublin Mountains and the higher plateau areas around Carrickgollogan, Ballycorus, Kiltiernan and Ballyman. These areas are a potential major amenity for both active and passive recreational uses. In terms of Development Plan policy the issues pertaining to the rural foothill areas of the County relate primarily to balancing the need for broad social and economic development with protecting the area against pressure for inappropriate development generated by its relatively close proximity to Metropolitan Dublin. In this regard the Council is also aware that the Landscape Character Assessments of the adjoining Counties of Wicklow and South Dublin are of relevance.

#### 4.1.2.2 Policy LHB3: Seascape

**It is Council policy to carry out a Seascape Assessment in accordance with any relevant recommendations contained in the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht's 'National Landscape Strategy for Ireland, 2014 – 2024' as and when it is finalised and published.**

Seascape Assessment is an extension of Landscape Character Assessment and, with 17km of coastline, Seascape is a crucial element of the County's history, identity and culture. It is recognised that a study of Seascape Assessment for parts of the County should be carried out, as there is a need to protect the character and visual potential of the coast and conserve the character and quality of seascapes.

The Planning Acts do not, to date, contain a legal definition of Seascape but given the extent of coastal Seascape asset for which the Country is internationally famed it is envisaged that the forthcoming Landscape Strategy for Ireland, will address Seascape Assessment.

#### 4.1.2.3 Policy LHB4: High Amenity Zones\*

**It is Council policy to conserve and enhance existing High Amenity zones and to seek to manage these and other areas to absorb further recreational uses and activity without damaging the amenities that affords them their special character.**

The zoning maps of the County Development Plan highlight areas that are zoned as High Amenity areas. These areas consist of landscapes of special value where inappropriate development would contribute to a significant diminution of the landscape setting of the County. These areas include the Glencullen Valley, Glendoo Valley and Kilmashogue Valley. The areas immediately adjacent to the High Amenity areas are, likewise, also sensitive landscapes as development in



these areas proximate may affect directly or indirectly the quality and integrity of the High Amenity areas.

Within zoned High Amenity areas the presumption will be to generally resist any development not related directly to the area's amenity potential or its existing use for agriculture, mountain or hill farming.

#### 4.1.2.4 Policy LHB5: Historic Landscape Character Areas

**In assessing development proposals it is Council policy to have regard to the recommendations and findings of the Historic Landscape Character Assessments (HLCA) already undertaken for a number of the urban-rural fringe areas of the County most likely to come under development pressure.**

A HCLA is a detailed holistic study of the historical development and environmental significance of an area. The HLCA offers a dynamic perspective of the total landscape, thereby contributing to the management and promotion of sustainable development within that area.

Five HLCAs have been carried out in the County to date – Barnacullia, Kiltiernan, Glencullen, Ballycorus - Rathmichael and Old Conna.

#### 4.1.2.5 Policy LHB6: Views and Prospects

**It is Council policy to protect and encourage the enjoyment of views and prospects of special amenity value or special interests.**

The County contains many sites and vantage points from which views over areas of great natural beauty, local landmarks, historic landscapes, adjoining Counties and the City of Dublin may be obtained. In addition to scenic views, the County also contains important prospects i.e. prominent landscapes or areas of special amenity value or special interest which are widely visible from the surrounding area. Specific Views and Prospects for protection have been identified in the Plan and are considered when assessing planning applications. It is also recognised that visual linkages between landmarks, landscape features and views exist. The Council will also take into account any Views and Prospects of adjoining Counties – Wicklow, Dublin City and South Dublin when assessing planning applications for development in those parts of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown proximate to the mutual County boundaries.

In the implementation of this policy it is the intention of the Council to:

- Prevent development which would block, or otherwise interfere, with a View which is designated for protection.
- Preserve the Prospects listed in the Plan.

In evaluating planning applications for development in the foreground of identified Views and/or Prospects, consideration will be given to the effect such development may have on the View and/or Prospect.

Where possible it is the intention of the Council to improve the viewing potential by seeking the removal or lowering of walls or other structures.

Roads or other public areas from which there is a View worthy of protection are graphically shown on the Development Plan Maps. Prospects (i.e. the distant object, notably mountains, being viewed), the preservation of which is an objective of the Council, are listed in Table 4.1.1 below:

**Table 4.1.1: Prospects to be Preserved**

• Dublin City and Bay from Deerpark, Mount Merrion
• Carrickgollogan from Ballybrack (e.g. Church Road and Churchview Road)
• Carrickgollogan from Bray Road (Shankill to Bray area)
• Carrickgollogan from Ballyman Road
• Carrickgollogan from the Enniskerry Road (south of Kiltiernan Village)
• The Scalp from Ballyman Road and part of the Enniskerry Road
• Three Rock Mountain and Two Rock Mountain from the Enniskerry Road (Sandyford-Kiltiernan area) and Sandyford Village
• Three Rock Mountain and Two Rock Mountain from the Ballybrack Road
• Three Rock Mountain and Kilmashogue Mountain from Marlay Park
• Tibbradden Mountain and Kilmashogue Mountain from Kilmashogue Lane
• Glencullen Mountain and Valley from the Ballybrack Road
• Glendoo Mountain from the Ballybrack Road
• Dalkey Hill from Ulverton Road, Station Road and the East Pier
• Killiney Hill from Vico Road, Station Road and the East Pier

Additional Views and Prospects can be identified through the day-to-day Development Management process, the formulation of Local Area Plans (and other forward planning documents) and through ongoing reviews of the list.

### 4.1.2. (ii) The Coast and the Mountains

The Coast and the Dublin Mountains of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown are clearly significant features iconic of the County. They are also both used for a wide variety of purposes - amenity, recreation, commercial, industrial, sporting and military. They represent areas of high landscape quality, natural heritage and amenity value.

The 17km coastline of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown is diverse - varying from rocky headlands with a variety of inlets, long established historical harbours and high quality beaches. The Coast is also an important economic resource - particularly for the fishing, aquaculture, leisure and tourism industries.

The Coast is home to a variety of important habitats and species. This is reflected in the number of designated sites of National and International importance along its length, including South Dublin Bay, Booterstown Marsh and the Dalkey Coastal Zone.

The Coast is increasingly important for the range of recreational activities it offers (e.g. sailing and swimming) and for its amenities (e.g. beaches). The retention of the Blue Flag status at Seapoint and Killiney Bay is an objective for the duration of the Development Plan and beyond. Improved public access to the coastal strip needs to be facilitated particularly including walking and cycling routes. Any proposals to improve access will have to accord with the provisions of the Habitats Directive. It is important that the coastal zone be managed and developed in a way which protects and enhances its natural heritage and landscape.

The impacts of predicted sea level rises due to climate change need to be considered while development in coastal areas must recognise the need for coastal protection where appropriate and realistic.

The Dublin Mountains have long been a place of public recreation and enjoyment forming a distinct southern

edge to the Dublin conurbation. Continuing growth of the Metropolitan Dublin area in terms of, not only population, but also extension of the geographical land area being developed for residential, business and industrial uses has been accompanied by increasing recreational pressures on the Dublin Mountains as an accessible resource for both active and passive recreational pursuits.

Traditionally, the recreational use of the Dublin Mountains would have been primarily for activities such as walking, road cycling, dog exercising and picnicking which capitalised upon the scenic qualities of the Mountains and the panoramic vistas over Dublin. Today there is a much wider range of recreational pursuits taking place in the Mountains including mountain biking, orienteering, mountain running.

#### 4.1.2.6 Policy LHB7: Coastal Zone Management and Dublin Bay\*

**It is Council policy to co-operate with the Coastal Zone Management Division of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine in the preparation of the National stocking exercise and in the preparation and implementation of a National Coastal Zone Management Strategy to ensure the conservation, management and protection of man-made and natural resources of the Coastal Zone.**

The coastal zone extends both seaward and landward of the coastline and its limits are determined by the geographical extent of natural coastline processes and human activities associated with the coast. Sustainable development in coastal areas is best achieved through a process of Coastal Zone Management (CZM). Coastal Zone Management involves the management of human activities and natural processes at work in coastal areas and aims to promote a partnership approach to planning

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and management in the coastal zone involving all stakeholders. (Refer also to Policy LHB2: Seascape). The Council will also support the work of both the Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly on the EU funded Celtic Sea Partnership - a project which aims to achieve healthy and sustainable seas - and the DoECLG in relation to the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.

A Coastal Defence Strategy Study was prepared for the County in 2010. This Study identifies specific coastal protection measures on a priority basis and undertakes a risk assessment of the vulnerability of the Study area and hinterland to both erosion and coastal flooding. The Study provides a framework for decision making in relation to development along the coast. (Refer also to Section 5.2.5.3 Policy CC15: Coastal Defence)

#### 4.1.2.7 Policy LHB8: Development in the 'Nearshore' area.

**It is Council policy to manage development in the 'Nearshore' area in accordance with the provisions of the general scheme of the Maritime and Foreshore (Amendment) Bill 2013. The 'Nearshore' extends from the High Water Mark to the Low Water Mark and is part of the Foreshore area.**

Under the Amendment Bill the Council will have responsibility for the development consent of development within the 'Nearshore' area - other than developments that are strategic infrastructure or those requiring Environmental Impact Assessment or Appropriate Assessment. The Council will also have responsibility for permitting certain activities in both the 'Nearshore' and 'Foreshore' areas (e.g. activities such as horse racing or filming) and for the development consent, by way of Ministerial Regulations, of certain developments beyond the 'Nearshore' area (e.g. deployment of buoys).

In dealing with development in the 'Nearshore' area the Council will aim to achieve a balance between the need to promote marine and coastal tourism and the need to protect the marine environment and fishery resources. Coastal protection, flood risk management, climate change adaptation and navigational safety are also issues of relevance in relation to development in the 'Nearshore'.

#### 4.1.2.8 Policy LHB9: Coastline Parks and Harbours

**It is Council policy to continue to upgrade recreational and tourism-related amenities in the public parks and harbours along the coastline including improved accessibility by the general public.**

There are a number of public parks and smaller incidental urban spaces along the coastline including Blackrock Park, the Peoples Park and Newtownsmith.

The Council will continue to develop the amenity potential of these parks and also ensure continued public access to harbour areas. It is an objective of this Council to maintain the Coal Harbour area and the East and West Piers of Dún Laoghaire Harbour as publicly accessible facilities. It is the intention of the Council to develop a linear marine parkland and walkway connecting the parkland areas at Newtownsmith with the beach area at Queens Road and onward to the East Pier in Dún Laoghaire.

#### 4.1.2.9 Policy LHB10: Beaches

**It is Council policy to promote the use of certain beaches for amenity and recreational use.**

The areas traditionally used for bathing in the County include:

- Booterstown Beach
- Blackrock Bathing Place
- Seapoint
- Sandycove Harbour and Beach
- 40 Foot Swimming Area
- Bullock Harbour
- White Rock Beach
- Killiney Strand
- Vico Bathing Area
- Corbawn

The Council will continue to develop the County's beaches in co-operation with local and environmental interest groups. Public access to beaches will be provided.

The Council shall comply with the provisions of the Bathing Water Quality Regulations to ensure that where any bathing water fails the mandatory bathing standards that the public are made aware of this fact by means of information notices posted at the bathing area.

The Council shall ensure compliance with the Directive on Bathing Water (Directive 2996/7/EC) as implemented by the 'Bathing Water Quality Regulations 2008' (S.I. No. 79) to:

- Ensure bathing waters achieve 'sufficient or better status by 2015'.
- Increase the number of bathing waters classified as 'good' or 'excellent'.

#### 4.1.2.10 Policy LHB11: Dublin Mountains Strategic Plan\*

**It is Council policy to support the vision and objectives of the Dublin Mountains Strategic Plan for Development of Outdoor Recreation (2007-2017) including the continued development and enhancement of the Dublin Mountains Way and its rerouting off public roads wherever possible.**

In 2006 the Dublin Mountains Partnership (DMP) was formed - comprising representatives from Coillte, South Dublin County Council, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and the Dublin Mountains Initiative (DMI). The Dublin Mountains Partnership was established to oversee the preparation of a ten-year 'Strategic Plan for Development of Outdoor Recreation in the Dublin Mountains'. The overall objective was to develop an integrated outdoor recreation plan for the area by linking existing and potential recreation components - in particular forests and other public/state-owned lands with recreational potential and including access routes - with the ultimate aim of improving the recreational experience for users of the Dublin Mountains, whilst continuing to recognise objectives and constraints of various landowners.

The flagship project of the DMP was the establishment of a long distance trail - the Dublin Mountains Way - across the mountains from Shankill to Tallaght. The trail was officially opened in October 2010.

In order to enhance the enjoyment and safety of walkers, the Planning Authority will facilitate where possible the Dublin Mountain Partnership's efforts to reroute the Dublin Mountains Way off public roads and to provide/improve access to publicly owned land in the upland area.

A Specific Local Objective identified in this Plan is the development of an Interpretative Centre and this has been mapped on Development Plan Map 11.

The Dublin Mountains Area also contains significant archaeology particularly in the form of passage graves, portal tombs and wedge tombs among other features. University College Dublin has been commissioned to carry out a study of the potential for sensitive tourism development related to this archaeological resource and the possible further development of this asset as part of the overall recreational component of the Dublin Mountains Asset.

#### 4.1.2.11 Policy LHB12: Public Rights-of-Way

**It is Council policy to:**

- **Preserve, protect, promote and improve for the common good all existing public rights-of-way which contribute to general amenity.**
- **Create new rights-of-way or extend or enhance existing rights-of-way either by agreement with landowners or through the use of compulsory powers in the interest of ensuring access to amenities, including the coast, upland areas, river banks, heritage sites and National Monuments.**
- **Create rights-of-way to provide linkages from the built up areas to the countryside and the coast.**
- **Prohibit development and keep free from obstruction existing rights-of-way, and to take legal action if necessary, to prevent any attempt to close them off.**
- **Prohibit development which would prejudice public access to existing rights-of-way, unless the level of amenity is maintained by the right of way, footpath, or bridleway being diverted by**

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**the minimum practical distance and the route continues to be segregated from vehicular traffic.**

- **Consider favourably planning applications which include proposals to improve the condition and appearance of existing rights-of-way.**

The Council will continue to use its powers under the Planning Acts to preserve and maintain existing rights-of-way, to create new ones where appropriate and to promote their greater use in amenity areas. In addition, the Council may seek to incorporate the creation of pedestrian ways as a condition of a planning permission to link amenities, facilities and points of interest.

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown has a strong track record in displaying rights-of-way on the County Development Plan maps and the Council is committed to ensuring that access by the public to amenity areas is retained. It is an objective of the Council to secure the retention of those established public rights-of-way as set out in Appendix 8. In making a right-of-way the burden of proof rests with the Local Authority and sufficient supporting evidence is therefore required in order to allow the Council make the decision on whether a right of way should be made. The Council will endeavour to investigate the making of additional rights-of-way during the life time of this Development Plan subject to resources.

#### 4.1.2.12 Policy LHB13: Recreation Access Routes

**It is Council policy to preserve all Recreation Access Routes which contribute to general amenity.**

The current Plan identifies Recreation Access Routes (RARs) within the lands under the control of Coillte. Coillte Teoranta, the State Forestry Board, was established to manage the public forest built up since the commencement of State planting and is the largest provider of forest recreation in Ireland. Coillte's commitment to recreation is underpinned by its membership of the Dublin Mountain Partnership and its commitment to the Dublin Mountains Strategic Plan for Outdoor Recreation 2007-2017. It is an objective of the Council to secure the retention of those established Recreation Access Routes as set out in Appendix 8 and to investigate the provision of additional agreed Recreational Access Routes in conjunction with the Dublin Mountains Partnership.

#### 4.1.2.13 Policy LHB14: National Park\*

**It is Council policy to co-operate in the extension of the Wicklow Mountains National Park.**

The Wicklow Mountains National Park was established by the Government in 1991 and originally covered an area of 3,700 hectares. This area has been expanded to 20,000 hectares and it is envisaged that the Park will continue to grow as new lands are acquired. The

primary aim of the Park is the conservation of local biodiversity and landscape. A very small portion of the Park falls within the jurisdiction of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown.

#### 4.1.2.14 Policy LHB15: Trails, Hiking and Walking Routes

**It is Council policy to promote the development of Regional and local networks of hiking and walking routes/trails and to develop Slí na Sláinte Routes. These should be waymarked/signposted and listed where feasible and appropriate.**

Implementation of this policy may involve the development of special interest features such as cultural walks designed around a number of literary personalities, and long distance hiking trails taking advantage of the Dublin Mountains (e.g. The Dublin Mountain Way from Shankill Village to The Scalp). The Council will co-operate with other relevant agencies, both public and private, and local landowners as appropriate with a view to increasing such routes - particularly in upland areas. This will include consultation with adjoining Local Authorities with a view to promoting routes extending beyond the County administrative boundary. Steps to encourage such routes may include secure parking, publication of maps and the provision of other appropriate facilities for users of such routes. Where possible and appropriate established hiking and walking routes will be signposted. (Refer also to Section 2.2.7.5, Policy ST8).

#### 4.1.2.15 Policy LHB16: Indicative Forestry Strategy\*

**It is Council policy to take full account of the Indicative Forestry Strategy (Draft 2008) produced by the Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.**

The Forest Service (Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food) is the National forest authority and is responsible for forest policy and the promotion of private forest.

The Indicative Forestry Strategy provides high level, National guidance to the suitability of land for afforestation and facilitates the establishment of high quality forests serving a variety of purposes including timber production and development, enhancement of the environment, mitigation of climate change, creation of alternative off-farm incomes and opportunities for tourism and amenity use. The Indicative Forestry Strategy will help guide forestry development in the County.

## 4.1.3 Biodiversity

The natural heritage of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown includes flora, fauna, geology and landscape. This variety of life is often referred to as biological diversity or 'biodiversity'.

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, stretching from the coastal strip along Dublin Bay to the uplands of the Dublin Mountains, contains a wide range of diverse habitats. These include coastal environments, urban gardens, parks and other areas of managed amenity grassland such as golf courses, woodlands (natural, semi-natural and commercial), hedgerows, rivers and streams, areas of upland grassland and agricultural holdings and upland heath and bog. The condition and preservation of these natural habitats, directly and indirectly, impacts on the quality of life of the residents and visitors to the County. While agricultural and upland habitats, predominates in the southern/southwestern quadrant of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, urban environments dominate the northern and eastern sectors of the County. Wildlife habitats occur throughout the County as many animals, birds, invertebrates and many wild plants have adapted to co-exist alongside mankind in the urban environment.

Implementation of this policy will involve, inter alia:

- Retention of trees, hedgerows and woodlands wherever practical.
- Designation of High Amenity zones.
- Retention of Green Belt areas.
- Identification of Views and Prospects of special amenity value or special interest.
- Identification, and mapping, of public rights-of-way and other strategic access routes.
- Protection of sites of geological and geomorphological importance.
- Protection of a Special Protection Area (SPA).
- Protection of proposed Candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSAC).
- Protection of proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA).
- Protection of existing access (including established rights-of-way) to such sites where feasible and the promotion of public access where it does not exist at present – but subject to ensuring and maintaining the highest environmental standards.
- Development of the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Ecological Network (Refer to Appendix 3).
- Identification and protection of non-designated sites of local and high nature conservation value - including those identified in the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Ecological Network (Refer to Appendix 3) - and management of features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild fauna and flora in accordance with Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.
- Maintenance and, as appropriate, achievement of 'favourable conservation status' of habitats and species within SACs as per the requirements and obligations of the Habitats Directive.

### 4.1.3.1 Policy LHB17: Protection of Natural Heritage and the Environment\*

**It is Council policy to protect and conserve the environment including, in particular, the natural heritage of the County and to conserve and manage Nationally and Internationally important and EU designated sites - such as Special Protection Areas, candidate Special Areas of Conservation, proposed Natural Heritage Areas and Ramsar sites - as well as non-designated areas of high nature conservation value which serve as 'Stepping Stones' for the purposes of Article 10 of the Habitats Directive.**



- Control and management of alien/invasive species (e.g. Japanese knotweed, Giant Hogweed etc) and noxious weeds (e.g. Ragwort etc) where possible.
  - Working with local communities, groups, landowners, National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and other relevant parties to identify, protect, manage and, where appropriate, enhance and promote understanding of sites of local biodiversity value.
  - Protection of the ecological integrity of proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs), Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), Statutory Nature Reserves, Refuges for Fauna and Annex 1 Habitats.
  - Promotion of the Integrated Biodiversity Impact Assessment (IBIA) approach - a methodological framework for biodiversity impact assessment that integrates SEA requirements with AA.
  - Working with National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and other parties to identify, protect where appropriate and manage, enhance and promote sites of local biodiversity value.
  - Recognition of the proposed UN Dublin Bay Biosphere designation.
  - Implement any relevant recommendation contained in the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht's National Peatland Strategy, when finalised.
- (Environmental Liability) Regulations 2008 and the Flora Protection Order 1999.
- National policy guidelines, including the Landscape and Landscape Assessment Draft Guidelines 2000, the Environmental Impact Assessment Sub-Threshold Development Guidelines 2003, Strategic Environmental Assessment Guidelines 2004 and the Appropriate Assessment Guidance 2010.
  - Catchment and Water Resource Management Plans, including the Eastern River Basin District Management Plan 2009-2015.
  - Biodiversity Plans and guidelines, including Actions for Biodiversity 2011-2016 and Ireland's National Biodiversity Plan.
  - Ireland's Environment 2012 (EPA) and to make provision, where appropriate, to address the report's goals and challenges.

#### 4.1.3.3 Policy LHB19: Biodiversity Plan\*

**It is Council policy to implement the provisions of the County Biodiversity Plan 2009-2013 and to produce a second Biodiversity Plan which will be set within the context of the second National Biodiversity Plan, 'Actions for Biodiversity, 2011 – 2016' prepared by the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands. Due regard shall be had to the recommendations arising from the implementation of the current 2009 – 2013 Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Biodiversity Plan or its successor plan.**

The primary features of the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Biodiversity Plan are:

- To translate International, European and Irish policies and obligations into effective local action on the ground.
- To provide a framework for the conservation of biodiversity of National and local importance.
- To collect biodiversity information on the County.
- To raise public awareness of biodiversity issues and to coordinate existing and new initiatives.
- To provide a basis for monitoring the success of biodiversity conservation at a National and local level.

The implementation of the current Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Biodiversity Plan has resulted in the completion of a number of projects/studies that have increased the overall level of knowledge, awareness and understanding of the biodiversity of the County. Due regard should be given to the current Plan or its successor Plan in any future development. These projects/studies are listed in Appendix 3 and have been used to produce the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Ecological Network Map (Refer to Supplementary A2 Mapping Booklet) which is an indicative map visually demonstrating the strength of the ecological network that currently exists across the County.

#### 4.1.3.2 Policy LHB18: Habitats Directive\*

**It is Council policy to ensure the protection of natural heritage and biodiversity, including European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network, in accordance with relevant EU Environmental Directives and applicable National Legislation, Policies, Plans and Guidelines.**

- Implementation of the above policy will be in accordance with the following and any updated/superseding documents:
- EU Directives, including the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC, as amended), the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), the Environmental Liability Directive (2004/35/EC), the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (85/337/EEC, as amended), the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) and the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC).
- National legislation, including the Wildlife Act 1976, the European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1989 (SI No. 349 of 1989) (as amended), the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000, the European Union (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (as amended), the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 477 of 2011), the European Communities

#### 4.1.3.4 Policy LHB20: Designated Sites\*

**It is Council policy to protect and preserve areas designated as proposed Natural Heritage Areas, candidate Special Areas of Conservation, and Special Protection Areas. It is Council policy to promote the maintenance and as appropriate, delivery of 'favourable' conservation status of habitats and species within these areas.**

There are a range of sites in the County that are designated under National and EU legislation. The National Parks and Wildlife Service designates Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSACs) under the EC Birds and Habitats Directives respectively. SPAs are designated for wild birds listed on Annex I of the EC Birds Directive and SACs are designated for habitats listed on Annex I and species listed on Annex II of the EC Habitats Directive. SPAs and SACs form part of a European network of designated sites called 'Natura 2000'. The Council is also committed to avoiding pollution or deterioration of important bird habitats outside SPAs (as per Article 4(4) of the Birds Directive). In line with the requirements of Article 3 of the Habitats Directive the Council will endeavour to improve the ecological coherence of Natura 2000 sites by maintaining, and where appropriate, developing, further features of the landscape which are of importance for wild fauna and flora.

In January 2013 the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht published a proposal to designate an area of Dublin Bay stretching from Rockabill in North County Dublin to Dalkey Island as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

The Council shall endeavour to engage with the National Parks and Wildlife Service to ensure Integrated Management Plans are prepared for all Natura sites and ensure that plans are fully integrated with all land use and water management plans in the County, with the intention that such plans are practical, achievable and sustainable and have regard to all relevant ecological, cultural, social and economic considerations and with special regard to local communities.

In accordance with 'Appropriate Assessment of Plans and projects in Ireland, Guidance for Planning Authorities' any development proposed within Designated Areas will require to be screened for Appropriate Assessment and may require a full Appropriate Assessment to be carried out to establish if the development will have a significant impact on the conservation objectives of the area.

Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) are designated to conserve species and habitats of national importance as well as sites of geological interest. All designated sites in the County are shown on the Development Plan Maps and are set out in Table 4.1.2 below.

**Table 4.1.2:** Designated Sites in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown.

Site no	Site name	pSPA/SPA	pNHA	cSAC/SAC
00210	South Dublin Bay cSAC		X	X
004024	South Dublin Bay and River Tolka Estuary SPA (includes Booterstown Marsh)	X		
004172	Dalkey Islands SPA	X		
001205	Booterstown Marsh pNHA		X	
001206	Dalkey Coastal Zone and Killiney Hill pNHA		X	
001753	Fitzsimons Wood		X	
001211	Loughlinstown Woods		X	
001207	Dingle Glen		X	
001202	Ballybetagh Bog		X	
000713	Ballyman Glen cSAC			X
00725	Knocksink Woods pSAC			X
002122	Wicklow Mountains cSAC	x		X
003000	Rockabill to Dalkey Islands cSAC			X

**pSPA/SPA** Proposed Special Protection Area (Birds)/ Special Protection Area (Birds)

**pNHA** Proposed Natural Heritage Area

**cSAC/SAC** Candidate Special Areas of Conservation/ Special Areas of Conservation

#### 4.1.3.5 Policy LHB21: Non-Designated Areas of Biodiversity Importance\*

It is Council policy to protect and promote the conservation of biodiversity in areas of natural heritage importance outside Designated Areas and to ensure that notable sites, habitats and features of biodiversity importance - including species protected under the Wildlife Acts 1976 and 2000, the Birds Directive 1979, the Habitats Directive 1992, and rare species - are adequately protected. Ecological assessments will be carried out for all developments in areas that support, or have potential to support, features of biodiversity importance or rare and protected species and appropriate mitigation/avoidance measures will be implemented. In implementing this policy regard shall be had to the recommendations and objectives of the Green City Guidelines (2008) and 'Ecological Guidance Notes for Local Authorities and Developers' (Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Version 2014).

The biodiversity of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown is not just contained within specifically Designated Areas but is found throughout the County. Many areas that do not have formal protection under legislation still possess a level of natural heritage importance which needs to be recognised and protected where possible. These areas include woodlands, wetlands, semi-natural grasslands, hedgerows, trees, rivers, streams, private gardens and other urban green spaces. Other areas of important biodiversity in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown can include graveyards, cemeteries and the green spaces associated with institutional lands. The Council recognise the importance of these areas as buffer zones and 'linkages' between formally designated ecological sites. A number of surveys of non-designated sites have been carried out since 2010. Sites which have been assessed and identified as making an important contribution to the biodiversity resource of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown at the National, County and local level have been incorporated in the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Ecological Network and are detailed in the Map in Appendix 3 (Refer to Supplementary A2 Mapping Booklet).

The Council will ensure that the impact of new developments on biodiversity is minimized and will seek to include measures for the enhancement of biodiversity in all proposals for large urban developments. The 'Green City Guidelines' prepared by UCD Urban Institute Ireland, Fingal County Council and Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council provides general guidance and advice on how best to retain and enhance biodiversity in new medium-to-high density urban developments.

In accordance with Article 4(4) of the Birds Directive the Council will endeavour to ensure the avoidance of pollution or deterioration of important bird habitats outside formally designated SPAs.

The four Dublin Local Authorities have also recently published 'Ecological Guidance for Local Authorities



and Developers' which aims to provide both developers and Local Authority staff with concise factual information on the best approach to deal with certain specific ecological issues.

#### 4.1.3.6 Policy LHB 22: County-Wide Ecological Network\*

**It is Council policy to develop an Ecological Network throughout the County which will improve the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network in accordance with Article 10 of the Habitats Directive. The network will also include non designated sites.**

Article 10 of the Habitats Directive states that "*Member States shall endeavour, where they consider it necessary, in their land use planning and development policies and, in particular, with a view to improving the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network, to encourage the management of features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild fauna and flora. Such features are those which, by virtue of their linear and continuous structure (such as rivers with their banks or*

*the traditional systems for marking field boundaries) or their function as stepping stones (such as ponds or small woods), are essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.”*

Many habitats of conservation concern - particularly designated sites - are 'linked' to the surrounding landscape by natural and man-made features, such as water courses (rivers, streams, canals and drainage ditches), hedgerows, treelines, roads and railways. It is important that areas of conservation concern are not considered in isolation. The linkages between buffer zones around such areas must also be protected to ensure the continued migration of species and genetic diversity throughout the wider County.

Issues related to connectivity, including maintaining and establishing connections between protected areas, play an integral role in land-use planning. The County Development Plan seeks to improve the overall ecological template in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown by enhancing connectivity between small fragmented areas.

National and local studies undertaken through the implementation of the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Biodiversity Plan, have allowed for ongoing assessments of the current status and nature conservation value of notable sites, habitats and species in the County. Certain areas that support the County's most valuable natural heritage assets have also been identified. Many of these areas play an important ecosystem role (e.g. water regulation, carbon sequestering, nutrient recycling etc.). While much research remains to be done, the material collected to date has been used to inform the initial development of an Ecological Network for the County. Ecological surveys have been completed to identify

those habitats which would improve the ecological coherence throughout the entire area. The specific habitats identified include treelines, hedgerows, scrub and woodland, watercourses and semi-natural areas such as mixed broadleaved woodland, sand dunes and saltmarshes, which were mapped and are shown in The Ecological Network Maps (Refer to Supplementary Mapping Booklet). A number of other specific Policies throughout the Plan, are aimed at affording further protection of these features (Refer also to Policy LHB23 and Policy LHB24 below).

The Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Ecological Network includes sites supporting habitats and species of International, National, County and local conservation value and makes a significant contribution to the 'Green Network' of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown. The Ecological Network Maps (Refer to Supplementary Mapping Booklet) highlights the key elements of the County's emerging Ecological Network for Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown. The Ecological Network includes:

- Designated sites (SACs, SPAs and pNHAs).
- Non-designated sites of high nature conservation value (i.e. non designated sites of National/County importance supporting Annex I habitats, Annex II species, rare and protected flora and high quality semi-natural habitats important at the County level).
- Non-designated sites of local conservation value (public parks, smaller local woodlands etc).

There are clearly similarities in the process of developing the Ecological Network and the Green Network as outlined in the Open Space hierarchy in Section 4.2. The primary difference between the two

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is that the Ecological Network is primarily focused on biodiversity issues whilst the Green Network is more all-encompassing and includes recreational elements and functions.

It is further recognised that the maintenance and development of the Ecological Network will play a future role in climate change adaptation. It is predicted that into the future climate change will be the single biggest cause of biodiversity loss after land use changes (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2005) Synthesis report). An Ecological Network throughout the County linked to and with adjoining land areas will allow for species migration which will inevitably take place over time as a climate change adaptation process. The Plan encourages the expansion of urban meadows in areas deemed appropriate in the County.

#### 4.1.3.7 Policy LHB23: Rivers and Waterways\*

**It is Council policy to maintain and protect the natural character and ecological value of the river and stream corridors in the County and where possible to enhance existing channels and to encourage diversity of habitat. It is also policy (subject to the sensitivity of the riverside habitat) to provide public access to riparian corridors to promote improved passive recreational activities.**

Existing County flood plain management policy seeks to limit development in identified floodplains and to preserve riparian corridors. Development proposals in river corridors will be considered providing they:

- Dedicate a minimum of 10m each side of the water's edge for amenity, biodiversity and walkway purposes (where practical).
- Where practical ensure no development - including clearance and storage of materials - takes place within a minimum distance of 10m measured from each bank of any river, stream or watercourse.
- Preserve the biodiversity of the site.
- Involve no land filling, diverting, culverting or re-alignment of river or stream corridors.
- Have no negative effects on the distinctive character and appearance of the waterway corridor and/or the characteristic and landscape elements of the specific site and its context.
- Do not impact on important wetland sites within river/stream catchments which provide an important function in terms of regulating the flow of water in these catchments and often support habitats and species of high nature conservation value.
- Take cognisance of any adverse impacts on the populations of protected species including otters and bats.

Rivers and Waterways are very important assets of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown. The Council shall consult, as appropriate, with Inland Fisheries Ireland in

relation to any development that could potentially impact on the aquatic ecosystems and associated riparian habitats and/or salmonid waters. Any works which will impact on a watercourse must adhere to best practice guidelines as outlined in the ERFB's 'Requirements for the Protection of Fisheries Habitat During Construction and Development Works at River Sites'. Riparian corridors, defined as those areas that are physically or visually linked to the waterway, are multi-functional in nature. They:

- Provide important visual amenity for the city as a whole.
- Allow for the provision and enhancement of wildlife habitats and natural corridors.
- Provide opportunities for waterfront developments, new recreational facilities and leisure activities.
- Provide opportunities for tourist-related development.
- Provide for drainage and flooding.

The County Biodiversity Plan has identified that watercourses in the County make an important contribution to the County's biodiversity. The Biodiversity Plan specifically identifies the Loughlinstown and Shanganagh Rivers as important river corridors meriting further protection.

#### 4.1.3.8 Policy LHB24: Hedgerows\*

**It is Council policy to protect hedgerows in the County from development, which would impact adversely upon them. It is Council policy to promote the County's hedgerows by increasing coverage, where possible, using locally native species and to develop an appropriate code of practice for road hedgerow maintenance.**

The 2007 Habitat Survey identified a pattern of hedgerows and tree lines with the majority of these occurring in the south of the County (south of the M50 Motorway and east of the southern end of the N11 road). Hedgerows were also identified as important heritage and biodiversity features in the County Biodiversity Plan which identified a survey of hedgerows as a targeted action.

The Hedgerow Survey Report (2008), identified the most important hedgerows in the County in terms of their biodiversity. These have been mapped and recorded.

### 4.1.3.9 Policy LHB25: Geological Sites

**It is Council policy to protect sites of Geological and Geomorphological importance, in particular the proposed Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and any County Geological Sites (CGS) that become designated during the lifetime of this Plan.**

To date, sites of geological interest have not been comprehensively included under the existing nature conservation designations. The Geological Survey of Ireland, in partnership with the National Park and Wildlife Service (NPWS) are now currently addressing the matter through the identification of the best Nationally significant geological and geomorphological sites for statutory designations as NHAs (National Heritage Areas). Other geological sites of National or local importance are being identified as County Geological Sites (CGS) and - by virtue of their recognition in the County/City Development Plans - will be protected from potentially damaging developments through the Development Management system. The list of Geological Sites is

set out in Table 4.1.3. The list has been prepared in conjunction with the Geological Survey of Ireland.

In furtherance of this policy the Council will endeavour where appropriate, to encourage, facilitate and support access and public Rights-of-Way to geological and geomorphological features of heritage value.

### 4.1.3.10 Policy LHB26: Green Belts\*

**It is Council policy to retain the individual physical character of towns and development areas by the designation of green belt areas where appropriate.**

The function of this policy is to protect the special amenity and biodiversity value of countryside while providing a visual and spatial break between urban areas. The Council will continue to retain the existing green belt between Bray and Shankill for the lifetime of this Plan.

**Table 4.1.3: Geological Sites**

MAP No.	Site Name	Easting	Northing	Principal characteristics Critical Feature(s) key words	Definite pNHA	Probable pNHA	Definite CGS
8	Three Rock Mountain	717625	723129	Tors			X
13	Ballybetagh Bog	719925	720029	Chronology, Giant Deer	X		
13	The Scalp	720924	720029	Glacial Outwash, Black Scree and spillway		X	
13	Ballycorus	722224	721629	Leinster Granite and associated mineralization			X
7	Killiney Hill	725923	725028	Killinite mineral	X		
7	Killiney Hill	725923	725028	Roche moutonnees, till			X
4, 7	Dalkey Hill	726323	726028	Leinster Granite Quarries		X	
4	Killiney Adit	726423	725728	Phosgenite mineral			X
4	White Rock, Killiney	726423	725728	Leinster Granite contact with Ordovician sediments		X	
7, 10, 14	Killiney Bay (Bray Harbour to Killiney Station)	726023 (Killiney), 3726823 (Bray)	724828 (Killiney), 729329 (Bray)	5.3km long coastal section of glacial sediments (interbedded diamicts)	X		
2	Blackrock Breccia	721424	729627	Granite Breccia			X
4	Dalkey Island	727773	726353	Water Well			X
10	Shankill	726223	722029	Mass wasting (slumping)	X		

**pNHA** Proposed National Heritage Area

**CGS** County Geological Site

### 4.1.3.11 Policy LHB27: Invasive Species

It is Council policy to support as appropriate the National Parks and Wildlife Service efforts to seek to control and manage alien / invasive species (e.g. Japanese knotweed, Giant hogweed, Himalayan balsam, etc.) and noxious weeds (e.g. ragwort, thistle, dock, etc.) within the County.

Invasive non-native plant and animal species (Alien Species) can represent a major threat to National, Regional and local biodiversity. They can negatively impact on native species, can transform habitats and threaten whole ecosystems causing serious problems to the environment and the economy. The Council is committed to assist controlling invasive species and will monitor public lands such as open spaces, verges and river valleys for such species. Preventative measures include ensuring that good site hygiene practices are employed for the movement of materials into, out of and around sites and ensuring that imported soil is free of seeds and rhizomes of key invasive plant species.



## 4.1.4 Heritage

Under the Heritage Act 1995 heritage is defined in a comprehensive manner as including monuments, archaeological objects, heritage objects such as art and industrial works, documents and genealogical records, architectural heritage, flora, fauna, wildlife habitats, landscapes, seascapes, wrecks, geology, heritage parks and gardens and inland waterways.

Other elements of the County's built heritage are covered in Section 6.1 'Archaeological and Architectural Heritage'.

### 4.1.4.1 Policy LHB28: Heritage Plan

**It is Council policy to implement the second Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Heritage Plan 'dlr Heritage Plan 2013 – 2019, Contributing towards Quality of Life'.**

The first County Heritage Plan spanned the period 2004–2008 but this was subsequently extended to 2012. Nearly 70 actions were identified in that plan, 55 of which were either partially or totally completed - including historical Landscape Character Assessments, an inventory of coastal heritage, habitat and hedgerows surveys, the appointment of a Biodiversity Officer, the production of a Biodiversity Plan and the development of the 'Mountains to the Sea' book festival.

The 'new' 2013–2019 Heritage Plan takes a more strategic approach in recognition that funding may be an issue over the life time of the Plan.

Three key messages are outlined in the 2013–2019 Plan along with a list of projects under each message:

- Communicating the story of the County's heritage. Key projects will include the production and implementation of an interpretation programme for the County, the creation of a central repository for heritage information and the production of a Heritage Guide for the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown sections of the Dublin Mountains Way.
- Caring for the County's environment. Key projects will include completion of the programme of ACAs, incorporation of heritage into appropriate plans and the formulation of a conservation plan for Carrickmines Castle.
- Increasing the level of community involvement in heritage. Key projects will include the creation of a Local Heritage portal website.



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**4.1.4.2 Policy LHB29: The Metals**

**It is Council policy to manage and enhance The Metals from the Peoples Park to Dalkey giving due regard to its historic importance while continuing to facilitate and encourage its use as a walking and cycling route between Dún Laoghaire and Dalkey.**

The Metals is an historic industrial pathway which was originally created to transport stone from the quarry at Dalkey to the harbour works in Dún Laoghaire. Today the pathway is an important recreational, walking and cycling route.

**4.1.4.3 Policy LHB30: Historic Demesnes and Gardens**

**It is Council policy that historic demesnes and gardens should be identified and protected to reflect and acknowledge their significance as part of the National Heritage. The following houses and gardens are listed: Cabinteely House, Marlay House, Fernhill and Old Conna.**

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown contains a wealth of historic houses and their demesnes which contribute to the identity and heritage of the County.

**4.1.4.4 Policy LHB 31: Civic Memorials**

**It is Council policy that it will, at appropriate times and having due regard to resources and suitable subject matter, erect Civic Memorials in accordance with Part 1 of the Council’s Memorials Policy adopted in April 2011 in order to raise awareness of the County’s history and heritage.**

The Memorial Policy details how the precise type of Civic Memorial may differ with each commemoration, but it is likely that the standard Memorial will be a plaque at an appropriate location. Civic Memorials may take the form of permanent and fixed plaques, a

Civic event, a statue, a suitable piece of public art and/or the naming of a building/road.

Civic memorials erected by the Council (or erected by other bodies with Council support or approval) should where possible be retained in position. This may not always be possible where a memorial is on private property.

Proposals for the erection of any Civic Memorial plaques on Protected Structures requires inputs from the Conservation Division of the Council.

**4.1.4.5 Policy LHB 32: Community Led Village Design Statements**

**It is Council policy to support proposals from local communities and community organisations that are promoting the preparation of Village Design Statements for their villages.**

Village Design Statements are drawn up through a process involving community participation, the Heritage Council and the Council’s Heritage Officer and Planning Department subject to availability of funds and staff resources.

**4.1.4.6 Policy LHB33: Strategic Environment Assessment- Mitigation Measures\***

**It is Council policy to implement the mitigation measures as set out in the Environmental Report accompanying the Development Plan, which are envisaged to prevent, reduce and, as fully as possible, offset any significant adverse impacts on the environment of implementing the County Development Plan.**

Implementation of this policy will ensure compliance with EU Directive 2001/42/EEC - the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (commonly known as the SEA Directive).

## 4.2 Open Space and Recreation

### 4.2.1 Introduction

Open space and recreational facilities are central to the delivery of sustainable communities. Such opportunities should be readily accessible, in terms of proximity and ease of access, to all sectors and age groups of the population, including those with mobility impairments. Good recreational facilities are fundamental in achieving a desirable quality of life and environment for existing and future residents, visitors and workers in the County. Local networks of high quality, well managed and maintained open spaces, sports and recreational facilities contribute to the overall 'green' dynamic that underpins the County, help enhance urban environments and need to be planned to be easily accessible to as wide a population base as possible.

It is a recommendation of the 'Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area' (2010–2022) that each Council prepares a Green Infrastructure Strategy... *"linking to adjoining areas and following regional connections"*. Green Infrastructure encompasses the protection, management and improvement of environmental resources by identifying and providing multi-functional and interconnected green spaces. Based on the recommendations set out within the Regional Planning Guidelines a Green Infrastructure Strategy should include provisions for improved access both to the countryside and along the coast through improved walking and cycling routes whilst all the time ensuring adequate protection to the existing environment and ecology of the landscape. Section 4.1 Landscape, Heritage and Biodiversity also sets out further elements including the development

of an ecological network which will feed into the Green Infrastructure Strategy.

The long-term value of quality open space and recreational facilities depends on coherent policies in the Development Plan, effective on-going management and maintenance by the Council and strong community support. The planning system has a vital role to play in protecting open space from inappropriate development and to ensure that new developments incorporate quality public and private open space and appropriate recreational infrastructure on-site, or, alternatively, contribute financially to the provision, development and enhancement of the wider overall open space network. With the increasing pressure for development and the continuing pattern towards higher densities in urban areas it is fundamental that new spaces and facilities are designed to the highest standards to ensure their potential usage and value is optimised. In strategic terms the overall objectives of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown in relation to open space and recreation are:

- To provide networks of accessible, high quality open spaces and sport and recreation facilities which meet the needs of all residents and visitors, are fit for purpose and are economically and environmentally sustainable.
- To develop a Green Infrastructure Strategy for the County.
- To protect and improve established green areas and public open spaces.
- To protect, improve and enhance recreational areas.



- To manage and maintain public parks to the highest standard.
- To provide new parks and green spaces with proper facilities in new development areas and communities.
- To develop and improve physical linkages and connections between the network of parks and public open spaces in the County.
- To ensure proper access to the recreational facilities of the County for all.

#### 4.2.1.1 Policy OSR1: Green Infrastructure Strategy\*

**It is Council policy to protect existing green infrastructure and encourage and facilitate, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, the development of new green infrastructure, recognising the synergies that can be achieved with regard to the following, sustainable transport, provision of open space amenities, sustainable management of water, protection and management of biodiversity and protection of cultural and built heritage.**

A Green Infrastructure Strategy for the County was prepared in 2014 (Refer to Appendix 14). It is intended to implement this Strategy during this Plan period and beyond that timeframe into the future. The Strategy will guide and assist in developing a County-wide green infrastructure network to ensure the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, including the protection of Natura 2000 sites, and to fully recognize the cumulative positive impact generated by creating connectivity between the nature conservation areas, parks, open spaces, rivers, floodplains, wetlands, woodlands, mountains, farmland and coastal areas found throughout Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown.



## 4.2.2 Open Space and Parks

### 4.2.2.1 Policy OSR2: Open Space Strategy 2012-2015\*

**In 2009 the Council prepared a comprehensive audit of the existing and proposed open space provision in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown. This culminated in the publication of the Open Space Strategy for the County, for the period 2012-2015. The actions and recommendations detailed in the Strategy will be implemented as appropriate and as resources allow.**

The Open Space Strategy examines open space resources in existing communities, how well the needs of communities are being met and identifies any changes needed to improve access to quality open spaces. The Strategy takes account of the quality, community value and use of existing open space - not merely the quantum of provision. The Strategy identifies where deficiencies exist in terms of overall provision and where established parks may need to be upgraded in response to the development of new growth nodes.

In conjunction with the existing Parks Master Plan Programme, the Open Space Strategy will enable proper planning of projects and infrastructural improvements into the future. The Strategy will help safeguard valued open space and guide the allocation of resources for future investment. In areas where deficiencies are identified it is the intention of the Council to acquire land - as opportunities arise and resources permit - to remedy such deficiencies. The Open Space Strategy will also inform the Green Infrastructure Strategy.

### 4.2.2.2 Policy OSR3: Hierarchy of Parks and Open Space\*

**It is Council policy to provide a hierarchy of quality parks and public open spaces which vary in size and nature and are designed to serve the needs of all members of the community, including people with mobility impairments, by being readily accessible and at a convenient distance from their home and/or places of work.**

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown recognises that a hierarchy and considered distribution of public open space is essential to provide for the needs of the population and to plan for future development. Public open space shall be provided as evenly as realistically possible throughout Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown on a hierarchical basis, ranging in descending order from Regional Parks with Countywide importance to small incidental spaces. This hierarchy shall be underpinned by the Greenways Network, which seeks to encompass

and connect the parks and open spaces and other green infrastructure across the County.

After research and analysis – including comparisons with other authorities in the Dublin Metropolitan area – a revised public open space hierarchy has been formulated as follows:

### Greenways Network

These are the collective networks of parks and open spaces, existing and proposed greenways, biodiversity corridors, cycle routes, waterways and coastal areas that are such unique features of the County. They can provide corridors for long distance pedestrian and cycle routes throughout the County and help link the parks and open spaces into a cohesive green infrastructure that helps define the County. Once they are formally identified, mapped and developed they can become an extremely valuable resource both for the County and the wider Region.

### Regional Parks

These are the premier parks in the County, which provide for a wide range of uses and attractions and include opportunities for both high quality active and passive recreation. They are generally large in size - with the Peoples Park in Dún Laoghaire being the notable exception. They include facilities such as playing pitches, changing rooms, toilets and Regional playgrounds for children of differing age groups. They may accommodate food and craft markets and cafes/tea rooms where appropriate. They also play an important role in terms of promoting and enhancing biodiversity due to their overall size and the ecosystems they sustain.

### District Parks

District Parks provide for a range of needs for a number of neighbourhoods. They offer a wide variety of uses and facilities and they provide for both active and passive recreation. The active recreational facilities in these parks usually include playing pitches, courts and multi-use games or playground areas. They also feature biodiversity corridors and areas.

### Local Parks

These parks lie within easy reach of most dwellings and businesses in a locality. They provide for the needs of a local neighbourhood. They can provide for kickabout areas, exercise equipment and seating areas.

### Amenity Open Spaces

These spaces are commonly located within residential areas/housing estates and are also found in commercial areas/business estates. They facilitate mainly passive recreation, casual play areas, pocket parks and visual amenity for residents and workers.

### Civic Spaces

These are located in the urban centres close to a civic, institutional and commercial buildings and generally



feature hard landscaping with planting and seating areas. They allow for sitting, meeting and eating, as they are generally located close to cafes and restaurants.

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#### 4.2.2.3 Policy OSR4: Future Improvements

**It is Council policy to continue to improve, landscape, plant and develop more intensive recreational and leisure facilities within its parks and open spaces insofar, as resources will permit, while ensuring that the development of appropriate complementary facilities does not detract from the overall amenity of the spaces.**

There are over 800 hectares of parks and open spaces of varying landscape types throughout the County. There are currently five Regional Parks:

- Marlay Demesne
- Cabinteely Park
- The Peoples Park and Seafront, Dún Laoghaire
- Blackrock Park
- Killiney Hill Park

The Regional Parks each have a unique character and theme, which provide an attraction for visitors and tourists. Shanganagh Castle, which was acquired by the Council, may provide an opportunity and catalyst for Shanganagh Park to develop as the sixth Regional Park in the County. The historic houses of Marlay and Cabinteely will continue to be refurbished and available for tours and other activities. With the exception of Killiney Hill Park, all Regional Parks will eventually include public toilets with disabled facilities, event spaces and ornamental gardens.

Fernhill Gardens will be developed into a 'Gateway' Park/Regional Park during the period of the County Development Plan 2016-2022. This will involve the preparation of a Master Plan for the site.

In addition there are seven District Parks and fifty Local Parks as indicated in the Open Space Strategy 2012–2015. The seven District Parks – distributed reasonably evenly throughout the County - include Kilbogget Park, Clonkeen Park, Shanganagh Park, Meadowbrook Park, Deerpark, the Dodder Linear Park and the proposed Jamestown Park.

A Parks Master Plan Programme, aimed at upgrading and developing the parks and open spaces throughout Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, is being implemented on a phased basis as resources permit.

#### 4.2.2.4 Policy OSR5: Public Open Space Standards

**It is Council policy to promote public open space standards generally in accordance with overarching Government guidance documents 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas - Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2009) and the accompanying 'Urban Design Manual - A Best Practice Guide'.**

The 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas - Guidelines for Planning Authorities' document provides detailed guidance on the provision of open space in new development areas. The Guidelines advocate that, in new development nodes, Local Area Plans should identify preferred locations for larger open spaces that would allow playing pitches and larger recreational facilities to be concentrated away from the housing areas but still easily accessible from them. The Guidelines emphasise the need for quality in public open spaces in terms of design, robustness, accessibility, biodiversity and passive supervision/overlooking. There should also be a clear definition between public, semi-private and private spaces.

#### 4.2.2.5 Policy OSR6: Allotments and Community Gardens\*

**It is Council policy to support the development of additional public allotments and community gardens to improve their provision and distribution across the County.**

Public allotments and community gardens can have a number of benefits including the promotion of healthy lifestyles, biodiversity and providing a cheaper local and sustainable source of food. The Shanganagh Community Garden was established in 2010 and it was extended in 2012. There are smaller such gardens in Fitzgerald Park and in Sallynoggin. The Council has established allotments at Goatstown and is exploring the possibility of providing allotments at Shanganagh Castle. In 2011 the Council prepared a draft policy on allotments and community gardens, which seeks to

promote further provision and wider distribution of such facilities across the County.

#### 4.2.2.6 Policy OSR7: Trees and Woodland\*

**It is Council policy to implement the objectives and policies of the Tree Strategy for the County – 'dlr TREES 2011-2015' - to ensure that the tree cover in the County is managed and developed to optimise the environmental, climatic and educational benefits which derive from an 'urban forest'.**

The Council has prepared a Tree Strategy for the County. It includes four overall objectives and six policy statements aimed at promoting the care and protection of existing trees and the planting of more trees in the right places. The Strategy also seeks to promote education and awareness and to engage more pro-actively with communities and other stakeholders.

Trees, groups of trees or woodlands which form a significant feature in the landscape or are important in setting the character or ecology of an area should be preserved wherever possible. They make a valuable contribution to the landscape and biodiversity of the County and significant groups of trees worthy of retention have been identified in the Development Plan Maps.

The Tree Strategy promotes new planting in the right places to ensure continued regeneration of tree cover across the County and to replace trees that are aging and/or unhealthy or are being lost as a consequence of development pressures.

The Council will identify and act on opportunities to provide for new tree planting in conjunction with new urban design/development and infrastructure and will plan for new planting to add to the overall 'urban forest' and so help improve the built environment. The term 'urban forest' embraces trees grown in, and close, to urban areas, including trees in streets, parks, gardens, on underdeveloped land and those in urban woodlands.

#### 4.2.2.7 Policy OSR8: Greenways Network\*

**It is Council policy to develop a comprehensive network of County Greenways linking parks and public open spaces and to liaise with adjoining local authorities and other stakeholders to achieve and improve wider external linkages and corridors.**

Greenways are "Shared-use routes for non-motorised users, (walkers, cyclists, roller skaters, horse riders) for pleasure, recreation, tourism and daily journeys". They are generally routes which predominantly utilise established green spaces but can also cross, and link to, public roads. Greenways provide and expand recreational opportunities for walking, jogging and cycling and can often coincide with river/stream corridors and can promote free passage for wildlife.



(Refer to Section 4.1.3.5 Policy LHB21: Non-Designated Areas of Biodiversity Importance) The development of the Ecological Network (Refer to Appendix 3) outlined in Section 4.1 Landscape, Heritage and Biodiversity Chapter will also feed into the Greenways Network. All of these elements will help form the green infrastructure in the County.

The following Greenway routes have been identified and a phased programme of works is being initiated, as resources allow, to bring the Greenway network to fruition. Some significant sections are already in place, for example, through Clonkeen Park and Kilbogget Park, and are functioning extremely well. Further Greenway corridors may be identified arising from the Green Infrastructure Strategy. The Greenway projects will comply fully with the requirements and objectives of the Habitats Directive.

- Blackrock to Killiney Greenway (via Rockfield Park, Clonkeen Park, Kilbogget Park to the Coast at Shanganagh Cliffs).
- Slang River Greenway (Dundrum Town Centre to Marlay Demesne and the Wicklow Way).
- Loughlinstown Greenway (Cornelscourt via Cabinteely Park and Cherrywood to the Coast at Shanganagh Cliffs).
- Lamb's Cross, Stepside to Carrickmines.
- Enniskerry Road to Jamestown Park to Ballyogan to Leopardstown.
- Shanganagh Park to the Coast.
- Dodder River Valley.
- Blackrock Village to Booterstown (via Blackrock Park).

- East Coast Trail, Booterstown to Bray (via Blackrock, Dún Laoghaire, Dalkey, Killiney).
- Marlay Park to Cherrywood (via Jamestown Park).
- Sandyford Business District to Cherrywood (via Leopardstown Racecourse).
- Clonkeen Road via Glenageary to Dún Laoghaire.
- Dundrum to Booterstown .
- Cherrywood to Shanganagh.
- Cherrywood to Shankill.
- The Metals.
- Loreto Park to Marlay Park .
- Dundrum to Dodder Park via Windy Arbor.

#### 4.2.2.8 Policy OSR9: Former Ballyogan Landfill

**It is Council policy to continue the rehabilitation of the former Ballyogan landfill site and following completion of these works the site will be developed as a new public park (Jamestown Park).**

The former Ballyogan landfill - now decommissioned - is located adjacent to the new development areas of Stepside and Kiltiernan/Glenamuck. Remediation works, on foot of the Environmental Protection Agency license requirements, have largely been completed. The site still requires some further rehabilitation in relation to overground gas pipes and other ancillary elements of this network. When completed the rehabilitated landfill will offer, over time, both passive and active recreational opportunities for the new neighbourhoods being developed close by.



A Masterplan will be prepared for Jamestown Park which will allow for the lands to be gradually developed on an incremental basis as a recreational facility both to serve the community and to form an important linkage between a network of open spaces.

#### 4.2.2.9 Policy OSR10: Sports and Recreational Facilities

**It is Council policy to promote the provision and management of high quality sporting and recreational infrastructure throughout the County and to ensure that the particular needs of different groups are incorporated into the planning and design of new facilities.**

The benefits accruing from participation in sport and recreational activities are well documented. Sports facilities and grounds in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown include a variety of both indoor and outdoor recreational facilities, which provide for the active recreational needs of the community. It is important that facilities are located where they are of most value and accessible to the community being served. Accessibility should be promoted primarily through public transport links and by walking/cycling. The Council will target specific communities/groups with currently low levels of participation and will focus on increasing awareness and access to sports, recreation and leisure in these identified areas.

The Council will encourage the dual use of new school facilities in the County through the development management process and in conjunction with the Department of Education and Skills.

#### 4.2.2.10 Policy OSR11: Protection of Sports Grounds/Facilities

**It is Council policy to ensure that adequate playing fields for formal active recreation are provided for in new development areas and that existing sports facilities and grounds within the established urban area are protected, retained and enhanced – all in accordance with the outputs and recommendations from the Open Space Strategy 2012-2015.**

Guidance in relation to the provision of open space associated with new developments and new development areas is provided through the 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas-Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2009). Within the established urban areas of the County, however, the lack of available sites means that new opportunities for recreational facilities (i.e. large playing pitches) are extremely limited. It is therefore necessary to seek to retain facilities in their current locations where they are of most value and accessible to the community being served. There will be a general presumption against proposals involving development of playing fields unless:

- The proposed development is ancillary to the use of the site as a playing field (e.g. new changing rooms) or caretakers accommodation and does not adversely affect the quantity or quality of pitches and their use. Plan
- The proposed development only affects land which is incapable of forming a playing pitch (or part of one).
- The playing fields that would be lost as a result of the proposed development would be replaced by a playing field or fields of equivalent or better quantity and quality and in a suitable location.
- The proposed development is for an outdoor or indoor sports facility of sufficient benefit to the development of sport to outweigh the loss of the playing field(s).

#### 4.2.2.11 Policy OSR12: Water-Based Sports

**It is Council policy to support and encourage water-based sports and maritime leisure activities along the coast subject to Beach Bye-Laws. The County features seventeen kilometres of coastline, which is a valuable asset. If utilised to its full potential it can contribute to the health and well being of the residents of, and workers, in the County and can also offer significant potential for tourism growth.**

It is recognised that the development of improved facilities for sailing and other water-based sports are important for the revitalisation of Dún Laoghaire Harbour and the other harbours along the coast of the County. The Council will support such water-based uses and activities in the harbours and along the coastline, with an emphasis on those that cater for a broader spectrum of the population.





#### 4.2.2.12 Policy OSR13: Play Facilities

**It is Council policy to support the provision of structured and unstructured play areas with appropriate equipment and facilities throughout the County and to ensure the needs of all age groups and abilities - children, teenagers, adults and older people - are facilitated in the public parks of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown.**

'Ready Steady Play! A National Play Policy' was published by the National Children's Office in 2004. The principal aim of the National Play Strategy is to improve the quality of children's lives through the provision of play opportunities.

The Council's 2003 Play Policy was the catalyst to the development of the 'Provision of Playgrounds Programme'. The Programme has been successful with the development of over 30 playgrounds (including a skate park and multiple use games areas) at various locations throughout the County. A revised Play Policy will be prepared during the lifetime of the Plan and will continue to seek to enhance existing facilities, while addressing gaps in provision that were identified both in the previous Open Space Strategy (2012-2015) and through detailed analysis of the Census 2011 Small Area Statistics.

In line with the National Play Policy provision should be made to include suitable play opportunities for all ages of the child population within new residential developments. Design details relating to play areas shall be submitted as part of any relevant planning application to include a detailed specification of any playground to be provided.

The Council will endeavour to ensure that all play facilities will be accessible to people of varying abilities, age and cultural backgrounds. The Council will have regard to changing demographics in how and where it provides for play. Multiple use games areas (MUGA) incorporating, for example basketball and 5-a-side facilities will be considered in any calculation of the 'Equipped Playspace' standards.

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