

# Community Strategy

7



**Vision Statement:** To promote social inclusion and enhanced 'quality of life' through integrating the continued sustainable growth and planning of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown with its social and community development by ensuring the retention, provision and maintenance of well considered and appropriate levels of social, community and cultural infrastructure readily accessible to all citizens of, and visitors to, the County.

# 7.1 Social Infrastructure and Community Development

## 7.1.1 Introduction

Successful and inclusive planning is about promoting the development of balanced and sustainable communities where the needs of the community are properly catered for in terms of the provision of necessary services and facilities which are readily accessible. Fostering a sense of community and delivery of quality services and facilities that are responsive to the identified needs of local communities is a key factor in the enhancement and development of 'quality of life'.

The Council has a long established and ongoing commitment to the delivery of additional social and community infrastructure throughout the County - funded through a combination of its own financial resources, channelling of specific development levies and contributions and in conjunction with developers. In working towards delivering the vision of establishing viable and sustainable communities, it is important to ensure that the Plan is underpinned by policies and proposals that are fully socially inclusive and are consistent with overarching National Guidance and Policies in respect of social and community development. At present such publications include:

- Putting People First Action Programme for Effective Local Government (2012).
- 'Local Government Reform Act, 2014' – Section 44.
- 'National Disability Strategy' (2004) Department of Justice and Equality.
- 'National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan 2013-2015' National Disability Strategy Implementation Group.
- 'National Women's Strategy 2007-2016' Department of Justice and Equality.
- 'Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach' (2012) National Disability Authority.

In seeking to secure a balanced social, community and cultural infrastructure in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, the broad objectives of the Plan will be:

- To facilitate the delivery of the goals identified in the Council's Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) currently in preparation.
- To develop and support sustainable neighbourhoods into the future through the commensurate and proper integration of housing with quality social and community infrastructure such as schools, amenities and childcare facilities - all in accordance with the 'Sustainable Residential





Development in Urban Areas', Guidelines published by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in 2009.

- To ensure a balanced and equitable provision of social and community facilities throughout the County - including housing for all, day care facilities for all, community centres and sports facilities.
- To facilitate the provision of accessible facilities and services through a participatory community development process that is responsive to the identified needs of the local community and leisure including the provision of local community/resource centres, recreational amenities and sporting facilities.
- To engage with key stakeholders, including community groups, to develop a shared responsibility for social, community and cultural development in the County.
- To help people to help themselves.

## 7.1.2 Community Support and Social Inclusion

### 7.1.2.1 Policy SCC1: The Local Economic and Community Plan

**It is Council policy to promote and facilitate participation of key stakeholders in the development and delivery of the Local Economic and Community Plan.**

The County Development Plan and the Local Economic and Community Plan effectively operate parallel to one another with the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) providing the social and economic vision for Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown whilst the Development Plan provides for the proper planning and sustainable spatial development of the County. It is a symbiotic relationship that should, in time, deliver a strategic and operational framework to plan and create viable systems for living and working in the County. Further details in respect of the LECP – which is currently being prepared – are set out in Section 3.1.1(iii).

By working with other agencies and stakeholders tasked to deliver social services in the County, as well as with the community and voluntary sectors and other social partners, the Council will assist in the delivery of the social and economic development goals of the Local Community Development Committee.

### 7.1.2.2 Policy SSC2: Social Inclusion and Participation

**It is Council policy to progressively reduce all forms of social exclusion that can be experienced because of gender, gender identity, marital status, family status, age, race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, nationality, homelessness and membership of the Traveller community.**

One of the overall goals of the County Development Plan is to promote social inclusion. Social inclusion is defined in many different ways but one of the most common understandings is that, through acting inclusively, society can ensure that everyone has equal opportunity to participate in, and contribute to, community life – regardless of their age, ability, nationality, religion or any of the many other characteristics which makes society diverse.

At the local level the Council, through its Social Inclusion Unit and considered policies in relation to housing – including social housing, homeless accommodation and refuge facilities (Refer also to Section 2.1.3(ii)) - community facilities, childcare, public transport, employment opportunities and accessibility, will encourage and proactively promote an ethos of social inclusion.

### 7.1.2.3 Policy SCC3: Universal Access

**It is Council policy to promote and support universal design whereby all environments can be used to the greatest extent possible by all people, regardless of age, ability or disability.**

All proposals for development shall have regard to the provisions of the National Disability Authority's document 'Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach – Planning and Policy' (2012) in order to ensure that access and movement through the development is available to all users of the development.

### 7.1.2.4 Policy SCC4: Safer Living Environment

**It is Council policy to facilitate the promotion and delivery of a safe environment for both the residents of, and visitors to, the County.**

Ensuring personal safety and promoting an environment of security within the community enhances overall quality of life. It is an objective of the Council to develop secure environments through the promotion of natural and passive surveillance within the public realm, public walkways and open spaces by encouraging supervised people-centred activities in these areas, supplemented by increased use of targeted lighting and CCTV cameras in liaison with An Garda Síochána. An environment of natural surveillance will also be encouraged in newly planned

areas through high quality and sensitive urban design (Refer also to Section 8.2.3.1).

The establishment of the Joint Policing Committee has enabled a closer co-operation between communities, policing services and the Council to identify safety and security issues at a local level in neighbourhoods and develop appropriate interventions. The development of three Local Policing Fora at neighbourhood level in the County allows for a local focus. The Local Policing Fora operate in a more informal way than the Joint Policing Committees and are intended to deepen the engagement between Gardaí, the local authority and neighbourhood communities.

### 7.1.2.5 Policy SSC5: Estate Management

**It is Council policy to support, as resources allow, the continued delivery of Estate Management structures and programmes in areas identified with a high proportion of Council-owned properties.**

The Estate Management programme seeks to enhance the role of neighbourhood development within specific areas. It involves collaboration, participation and partnership between residents, the Council and other relevant agencies in the exchange of information and ideas - all with a view to generating a greater sense of involvement and responsibility among residents in the decision-making processes directly impacting on their neighbourhoods.

## 7.1.3 Community Facilities

### 7.1.3.1 Policy SCC6: Community Facilities

**It is Council policy to support the development and provision of a wide range of community facilities distributed in an equitable manner throughout the County.**

The 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas' Guidelines (2009) stress the need to integrate housing with the provision of supporting community and social infrastructure. The Guidelines acknowledge that community facilities should be located within, or close to, neighbourhood centres and be well served by public transport.

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council recognises that facilities which cater for social and community needs are an essential component in designing for sustainable communities. Meeting halls and community centres, along with schools, health centres, doctor surgeries, libraries, community playgrounds, day care facilities for older and disabled people and churches provide a communal resource through which the residents of a neighbourhood can gain information, education, medical or welfare assistance and social contact. The Council will endeavour to ensure that an appropriate range of community facilities is provided across the County, to ensure that the vitality and sustainability of residential neighbourhoods in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown is fostered.





In designing for new facilities it is essential to ensure that they are adaptable over time to meet the changing needs of the population and to provide potential for maximising their dual usage during evenings/weekends/school holidays. When considering proposals for development, the Planning Authority may take into account benefits to the public in the form of community facilities.

Where new social and community facilities are being retrofitted into established neighbourhoods, the issue of potential adverse impacts on residential amenity and increased pressures on limited on-street car parking spaces will require to be addressed in a sensitive manner.

In terms of direct provision, the Council has an extensive on-going development programme focused on the provision of additional or improved social and community infrastructure. New facilities either recently constructed, or currently in train, include:

- The Samuel Beckett Civic Campus at Ballyogan.
- The Central Library and Cultural Centre, Dún Laoghaire.
- The refurbishment of Deansgrange and Blackrock Libraries.
- Sandyford Community Centre.
- Belarmine Community Facility.
- Stonebridge Community Centre.
- Extensions/refurbishments to Sallynoggin, Ballybrack and Shanganagh Park House, and Park House Dún Laoghaire.

In relation to the direct provision of other strands of community infrastructure by other agencies -

education, social services and health care facilities - the Council's role is understandably more peripheral and often largely confined to the reservation and securing of sites (Refer also to Section 8.2.12).

### 7.1.3.2 Policy SSC7: New Development Areas

**It is Council policy to ensure that proper community infrastructure and complementary neighbourhood facilities are provided concurrently with the development of new residential growth nodes in the County.**

The Government's 'Developing Areas Initiative' (2009) seeks to ensure greater coordination and integration of infrastructure and service delivery at strategic growth centres and key development sites. The Initiative emphasises that the roll out of infrastructure should not only match, but should anticipate, development and that improved integration between the provision of housing and essential supporting community and social infrastructure - such as schools, community amenities and child care facilities - should be a prerequisite.

The planning and implementation of various growth/redevelopment areas in the County are being advanced through various mechanisms including Local Area Plans, Urban Framework Plans and Strategic Development Zones. The detailed assessment of community and social infrastructure needs associated with each of these growth nodes - and the specific programming and phasing of same - will be undertaken as part of these planning processes (Refer also to the Core Strategy set out in Section 1.2).



### 7.1.3.3 Policy SSC8: Schools

**It is Council policy to ensure the reservation of primary and post-primary school sites in accordance with the requirements of the relevant education authorities and to support the provision of school facilities and the development / redevelopment of existing schools throughout the County.**

In the context of increasingly unsustainable commuting patterns by students, the Guidelines on 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas' (2009) draws particular attention to the need to plan for future schools provision and advocates timely consultation between Planning Authorities and the Department of Education and Skills.

A 'Code of Practice on the Provision of Schools and the Planning System', prepared jointly by the DoEHLG and the Department of Education and Science in 2008, provides guidelines for the forecasting of future planning for schools nationally. The Code of Practice is built around three core objectives:

- School provision should be an integral part of the evolution of compact sustainable urban developments where the opportunities to walk or cycle to school are maximised.
- The provision of new schools should be driven and emerge from an integrated approach between the planning functions of the Planning Authority and the Department of Education and Skills.
- Planning Authorities will co-operate and co-ordinate with the Department of Educational and Skills in ensuring the timely delivery of schools.

The County Development Plan makes provision for educational facilities through the identification and reservation of potential school sites. The Planning Authority already has well-established lines of communication with the Department of Education and Skills in relation to future school provision and the reservation of sites.

In the identification of sites, consideration needs to be given both to the co-location of childcare provision and the potential use of school facilities by the wider community outside of school hours and during school holidays. Future school provision within new growth areas specifically should be planned and implemented in tandem with residential development, especially where the overall scheme is being promoted through the mechanism of a Local Area Plan/Strategic Development Zone or similar (Refer also to Section 8.2.12.4).

In addition to new school development, the Council will support the appropriate development and/or redevelopment of existing schools within the County that will enhance existing facilities - including sports facilities - on site. All applications received in relation to school development should have regard to any requirements set out by the Department of Education and Skills (Refer also to Section 8.2.12.4).

### 7.1.3.4 Policy SSC9: Further and Higher Education Facilities

**It is Council policy to support the development and ongoing provision of Further and Higher Level Institutions in the County including University College Dublin (Belfield and Blackrock campuses), Dún Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology and Blackrock Further Education Institute (Formerly Senior College Dún Laoghaire) Dún Laoghaire Further Education Institute (formerly Dún Laoghaire College of Further Education), Sallynoggin College of Further Education, Stillorgan College of Further Education, Dundrum College of Further Education and any new Further and Higher Level Institutions - including Irish colleges or major overseas universities whether within established campuses or in new campuses.**

It is recognised that education is a critical driver of economic success and social progress in modern society. The provision of quality Further and Higher Level education and training is central to the high skills, knowledge and innovation-based economy that will underpin ongoing and future prosperity. Improved access to education and training opportunities are also crucial to helping achieve the objectives of a more sustainable and inclusive society.

The importance of Further and Higher Level education to Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown is fully recognised. The primary Further and Higher level institutions in the County are University College Dublin and the Dún Laoghaire Institute of Art and Design and Technology.



There are also a number of other Further and Higher Level Institutes within the County including (but not limited to):

- Blackrock Further Education Institute
- Dundrum College of Further Education
- Dún Laoghaire Further Education Institute
- Sallynoggin College of Further Education
- Stillorgan College of Further Education.

#### (i) University College Dublin (UCD)

University College Dublin occupies a 132-hectare site and is only 4km south of the city centre. The affiliated Michael Smurfit Graduate School of Business, located in Blackrock, is Ireland's leading business education and research centre.

UCD is Ireland's largest and most diverse university. The current population of UCD for the 2013/2014 academic year is circa 26,700 in total - comprising 16,300 undergraduate students, 5,400 post graduate students and 5,500 staff and researchers. There are approximately 5,500 international students drawn from approximately 120 countries.

The County Council recognises the significant role that UCD plays in the County and the contribution its education, and research and development activities make to the attractiveness of the County for investment. In addition, the Council recognises the strategic importance of UCD for employment creation at Regional and National level, as evidenced by the UCD-TCD Innovation Alliance to create the National Innovation Zone.

The UCD Campus Development Plan 2005-2010-2015 (which is currently under review) sets out aims and priorities for the future direction of the University. This Plan includes a vision for world-class architecture, a network of greened pedestrian walkways and a transformation of the academic infrastructure to reflect the ambitions of a leading European university.

The primary aspiration of the Campus Development Plan is the advancement and promotion of UCD as a modern university, one that excels in both academic achievement and the built environment. UCD seeks to promote itself as a sustainable, healthy and living campus through the development of both academic and non-academic facilities, increased on-campus residencies and the promotion of knowledge based industry-linked research facilities.

The Planning Authority will continue to work closely with UCD in relation to advancing campus development in accordance with both County Development Plan and National policies and guidance.

#### (ii) Institute of Art, Design and Technology (IADT)

The Institute of Art, Design and Technology, established in 1997, occupies a 12 hectare site some 3km from Dún Laoghaire Town Centre. The IADT's specialist role within Ireland was recognised recently



in the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 (January 2011).

IADT has seen major expansion in recent years including an incubation facility, known as the Media Cube, which is specifically focused on the Digital Media sector. Planning permission was also granted in 2011 for the provision of a collection of stand-alone campus buildings including a second Digital Media building, a consolidated workshop building and a sports hall.

The National Film School at IADT is a centre of excellence for education and training in film, animation, broadcasting and digital media and a new National Film School building was opened in November 2013.

The growing academic and administrative needs stem primarily from the growth in student numbers. There are currently circa 2,300 students, a whole time staff of 200, with an additional 350 part-time staff.

An IADT Master Plan, produced in 2004, seeks to promote the Institute as the leading Irish educator within the knowledge, media and entertainment sectors. It is envisaged that the Plan, aimed at developing a substantial campus infrastructure, will ensure that the growing needs of the Institute can be met whilst at the same time improving the overall character and sustainability of the campus. This Master Plan is due to be reviewed in 2014/2015.

The Planning Authority will continue to work closely with IADT in relation to campus developments in accordance with both County Development Plan and National policies and guidance.



### 7.1.3.5 Policy SSC10: Health Care Facilities

**It is Council policy to support the Health Service Executive and other statutory and voluntary agencies in the provision of appropriate healthcare facilities - including the system of hospital care and the provision of community-based primary care facilities, mental health and wellbeing facilities. It is Council policy to encourage the integration of appropriate healthcare facilities within new and existing communities.**

Provision of public health care services for Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown is the responsibility of the Health Service Executive (HSE). At present there are two public hospitals in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown - St Michaels in Dún Laoghaire and St Columcilles in Loughlinstown. In addition, the National Rehabilitation Centre and a number of privately operated hospitals, including Blackrock Clinic and Beacon Hospital, are also located in the County. There are also ten public health centres and a number of nursing homes distributed throughout the County.

In recent times the HSE rebalanced its approach with a radical shift from secondary care to primary care provision. The primary care 'model' promoted has a stronger emphasis on working with communities and individuals to improve health and well-being. Building on the National Health Strategy 'Quality and Fairness - A Health System for You' (2001) the primary care 'model' aims to ensure everyone has ready access to a broad spectrum of care services through a local Primary Care Team.

The ability of Primary Care Centres to provide local and integrated facilities in line with the Government's Primary Care Strategy, is acknowledged by the Planning Authority. Such facilities, together with

community support services, will be sought on suitably zoned lands and in close proximity to new and existing residential areas to allow communities access to multi-disciplinary health care, mental health and wellbeing services in easily accessible locations throughout the County.

### 7.1.3.6 Policy SSC11: Childcare Facilities

**It is Council policy to encourage the provision of affordable and appropriate childcare facilities as an integral part of proposals for new residential developments and to improve/expand existing childcare facilities across the County. In general at least one childcare facility should be provided for all new residential developments subject to demographic and geographic needs. The Council will encourage the provision of childcare facilities in a sustainable manner to encourage local economic development and to assist in addressing disadvantage.**

There continues to be a growth in demand for childcare services and the provision of good quality and affordable services close to local communities is important. The primary policy basis for the provision of childcare facilities is the 'Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (DoEHLG, 2001). In the interest of promoting sustainability the Guidelines advocate that suitable locations for the provision of childcare facilities include residential areas, employment nodes, large educational establishments, major towns/district/neighbourhood centres and areas convenient to public transport networks. Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown fully supports the development and delivery of accessible, high quality and affordable



childcare facilities to address the overall development needs of the County.

Where a new residential development is proposed – with 75+ dwellings (or as otherwise required by the Planning Authority) – one childcare facility shall be provided on site in accordance with Sections 2.4, 3.3.1 and Appendix 2 of the ‘Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ (2001). The provision of childcare facilities within new, and indeed existing, residential areas shall have regard to the geographical distribution and capacity of established childcare facilities in the locale and the emerging demographic profile of the area.

County Development Plan policy in relation to childcare will be guided by recommendations arising from the 2009 Strategic Mapping Exercise and any subsequent Mapping Exercises the County Childcare Committee conduct. Recently Pobal has employed Census 2011 data to map childcare facilities within the County, enabling more objective analysis of gaps in provision and the targeting of areas where facilities may be needed in the future.

Detailed requirements and standards in respect to childcare provision associated with development projects are set out in the Development Management Section of the Plan (Refer also to Section 8.2.12.1).

### 7.1.3.7 Policy SSC12: Arts and Culture

**It is Council policy to facilitate the continued development of arts and cultural facilities throughout Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown in accordance with the County ‘Arts Development Policy, 2011-2014’ and any subsequent County Arts Development Policy.**

The existing arts and cultural infrastructure of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown includes theatres, performance spaces, galleries, art centres and outdoor event spaces. The Council supports the development of the arts at a local level and aspires to provide opportunities for all who live in, work in and visit the County

to engage with the Arts as creators, participants and spectators. The Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council ‘Arts Development Policy 2011–2014’ recognises the Council’s pivotal role in the promotion and encouragement of the arts and culture, while prioritising direction for future development and investment.

### 7.1.3.8 Policy SSC13: Libraries

**It is Council policy to promote and develop the County Library Service in accordance with the National objectives laid down in the draft ‘Strategy for Public Libraries, 2013–2017’ prepared by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government. The County’s network of Carnegie Libraries shall be retained for public and community use.**

dlr Libraries operate branches located at Blackrock, Cabinteely, Dalkey, Deansgrange, Dundrum, Dún Laoghaire, Shankill, and Stillorgan. The opening of dlr LEXLCON, the Central Library and Cultural Centre in Dún Laoghaire, will significantly complement and enhance the existing library offer within the County.

The implementation of the County’s overall library policy will be in accordance with the objectives and agreed priorities identified in the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Library Development Programmes 2010–2013 and any subsequent Library Development Programmes. The 2010-2013 Programme sought to plan and allocate resources in accordance with the demand on services and to enhance the traditional role of the library service by further embracing information technology. The 2010-2013 Programme emphasised inclusivity and aimed to extend the service beyond library walls through online services and vibrant outreach and cultural programmes. It is proposed to prepare a 2015-2018 Library Development Programme which will further develop these aspirations while responding to the dynamic opportunities afforded by the resurgent economy and will focus on empowering citizens digitally and culturally.

