

The Dundrum Local Area Plan

Summary of Imagine Dundrum's Submission to the Pre-draft Consultation



*In late 2018, Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council began work on a **Dundrum Local Area Plan 2019-2025** to guide the future planning and development of the Dundrum area, by publishing an Issues Paper and inviting the public to submit comments and proposals during a pre-draft consultation period.*

The consultation closed in December 2018 and the draft Plan will appear later in 2019.

This process takes place in the context of the forthcoming redevelopment of Dundrum's Old Shopping Centre site and the West side of Main Street by the Hammerson-Allianz partnership.

This document summarises the main observations and proposals in Imagine Dundrum's submission - our contribution to this stage of the Local Area Plan process. It draws on our own research, discussions, and a wide range of consultations with local people over the last three years.

INTRODUCTION.

Imagine Dundrum's submission welcomes the start of the Dundrum Local Area Plan process, and looks forward to seeing the specific commitments for Dundrum made in the *Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Development Plan 2016-2022* fully realised in the final Local Area Plan.

Most sections of our document correspond to the main topics dealt with in the *Issues Paper*, but two extra sections stress the necessity of addressing the needs and wishes of children and young people, and the needs and wishes of people with disabilities and older people, in the LAP process. The new Dundrum must be planned and designed as an inclusive and accessible urban environment, supporting a truly sustainable community into the future.

1. POPULATION, DEMOGRAPHICS AND THE LAP BOUNDARIES.

First, we urge a reconsideration and expansion of the predicted **population numbers and profile** for the LAP area. An accurate assessment of Dundrum's future requirements must take account of the significant population growth and change expected over the next few years, resulting both from current large-scale apartment building close to the historic centre, and from the substantial developments proposed for the Old Shopping Centre and Central Mental Hospital sites.

Second, in terms of **geographical boundaries**, we emphasise that Taney Church and parish centre are a key node in the complex and interconnected networks of the Dundrum community, and so must be included in the area covered by the Local Area Plan.

2. FUTURE DUNDRUM: A CHILD- AND YOUNG PERSON-FRIENDLY VILLAGE.

Our core request is that, in the final Local Area Plan, the needs of children and young people are fully acknowledged, and provision made explicitly for them. This means the planners must engage directly and meaningfully with them during the LAP preparation process. (Imagine Dundrum's 'pilot project' with school students is relevant here.)

3. FUTURE DUNDRUM: AN ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE VILLAGE.

We trust that the core commitments of the *Dublin Declaration on Age-friendly Cities and Communities* (2013) to making Dún Laoghaire Rathdown an age-friendly County - increasing participation, ensuring safety, strengthening community, and creating shareable public spaces – will underpin the new planning framework for Dundrum

Making Dundrum disability-friendly will require a detailed audit of its walkability and accessibility, working with local residents with disabilities. The LAP should draw on new technology for imagining and designing a disability-friendly urban environment.

4. PROTECTING DUNDRUM'S BUILT HERITAGE.

An unique historic streetscape can be vital in creating a sense of belonging to, and caring for, a local area. Imagine Dundrum, concerned about the possible future fate of our heritage Victorian buildings, has formally proposed to the County Council that Dundrum Main Street and crossroads area be granted Architectural Conservation Area status. We include that proposal in our LAP submission, mentioning also other local historic buildings worth preserving.

5. MOVEMENT: TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT IN DUNDRUM VILLAGE.

In our view, it is essential that the Local Area Plan implements the commitments to traffic calming and removal of on-street parking which were set down in the Council's 2003 *Urban Framework Plan* for Dundrum. We support the concept of a one-way traffic flow, as the best way to facilitate access to services and shops in the core Village area.

Responding to Busconnects proposals: Imagine Dundrum members are in consultation with County traffic engineers and the National Transport Authority to modify the draft *Busconnects* proposals, which have the potential to reduce Dundrum's Main Street to a busy bus corridor, completely undermining our and the Council's vision of a thriving, safe and truly 'liveable' street for people, at the heart of our Village.

6. MOVEMENT: WALKING AND CYCLING IN DUNDRUM VILLAGE.

We expect the Local Area Plan to create the 'pedestrian and cycle friendly and traffic calmed environment' for Main Street promised in the *DLR County Development Plan*. We trust that the LAP framework for movement in and around Dundrum will adhere fully to the standards set in the Government's *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets* (2013).

Pedestrians: our document details the main problems for pedestrians in Dundrum, highlighting the need for an accessibility audit and a substantial redesign of footpaths and pedestrian crossings to make the core Village area safe and useable by everyone. In addition, the current fragmentation of the area can only be overcome by increasing 'permeability' and creating new walking routes linking the different elements (residential, commercial, leisure etc.) in the overall urban village mix.

Cyclists: the current safety and practical issues for cyclists in Dundrum are barriers to encouraging more people to switch to cycling. New cycling-related provisions for Dundrum must include: maximising segregation of pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehicles; auditing the safety and useability of current cycle paths; understanding daily patterns of cycling by school children, and prioritising their safety; and reviewing current cycle parking facilities.

7. URBAN DESIGN AND PLACEMAKING.

Planning guidelines in the Local Area Plan must recognise Dundrum's unique character as the second major town of the County, and a place with more than 300 years of continuous history.

Dundrum undeniably requires civic, cultural and community facilities in line with its status in the County, and the integrity of its built environment must be maintained. Both are addressed in Special Local Objectives (SLOs) for Dundrum in the current *DLR County Development Plan*, which also recognises the urgent need for many specific public realm enhancements. Our LAP submission includes practical proposals on street furniture, lighting, shop fronts and signage, public toilets, and the provision of open public space.

If the future Dundrum is to be an authentic place as an urban village, it must retain the historic low-rise streetscape in and adjoining Main Street. We argue that, where the new national *Building Heights Strategy* allows for taller buildings, these must be carefully and appropriately integrated into an overall design which respects and reflects Dundrum's specific architectural heritage. Links must be made through materials, too, acknowledging the use of granite, red brick, and slate in existing buildings and street elements.

8. SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES.

Imagine Dundrum's main focus is on the necessity of a new Civic Centre at the heart of Dundrum Village. We want the Local Area Plan to provide for a significant public building and surrounding public space, both to recognise Dundrum's important role in the County and to act as the hub and focal point of a growing and successful local community.

Proposed core provisions in the Civic Centre: a modern library and cultural centre; a one-stop shop providing Council services, citizens' and tourist information; multi-use spaces for community events, meetings and services (including youth and health-related services); outdoor public space for markets, open-air concerts, and community festivals.

Sustainable communities require enabling infrastructure beyond the provision of housing and shops, and the successful integration of Dundrum's changing and expanding population will require investment in appropriate high-quality services and facilities.

We welcome the recent announcement of State funding for an Action Plan and framework for the optimum development of Dundrum's civic, cultural and community facilities.

9. OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION.

Open spaces and parks are essential for healthy communities, and children especially need opportunities for outdoor play, yet Dundrum currently has minimal provision of parks, playing pitches and play facilities. The Local Area Plan must rectify this, and prioritise outdoor space for adults and children living in and around Dundrum, partly by making imaginative use of the small-scale and largely underused 'amenity areas' and the infill spaces in the surrounding housing estates. In addition, new recreational and leisure facilities are needed to provide for teenagers and for intergenerational activities.

All new building developments must provide at least the minimum 10% of the site for public open space, as the *DLR County Development Plan* specifies. The redeveloped Old Shopping Centre area must incorporate 'pocket parks', seating and play areas, while a larger public plaza or 'market square' is vital as the focal point of the new development, which will attract all age groups to use it.

10. HOUSING AND HOUSING NEED.

Although the designated LAP area is relatively small, the new guidelines for housing must take a wider view, responding to Dundrum Village's position at the heart of a densely populated hinterland. The main challenge is to use the opportunities of change and the potential of new housing developments to create the greater diversity on which future community sustainability will be built.

We urge the County planners to use all their powers and their influence to encourage developers to provide a mix of housing types and tenures, accommodating a range of household types, age and income groups. Needs for social and affordable housing must be met, provision made for different types of older people's housing (including homes for 'down-sizers') and apartments must be available for sale as well as rent.

The new LAP housing guidelines could facilitate and support possibilities for increasing density by using innovative design to adapt existing houses, provide dwellings on corner sites and 'backlands', use mews type spaces, and facilitate 'living over the shop'.

Finally, it is essential that the Council stipulates the highest standards of energy efficiency, particularly reducing or eliminating dependence on fossil fuels, in all future public and private building in Dundrum.

11. RETAIL DEVELOPMENT IN DUNDRUM VILLAGE.

Imagine Dundrum considers that 'big retail' provision of the Dundrum Town Centre is already adequate to the needs of the core area and the hinterland, and that additional facilities of this kind are not appropriate for the Village area.

So we ask the Council to seize the opportunity offered by the forthcoming redevelopment by providing, through the Local Area Plan, a planning framework to guide and enable the restoration of an authentic 'village' environment, one with thriving local small and medium-sized independent businesses (of which a significant number already exist), and an expanded 'café culture' to enhance social connectedness and bring evening life to Main Street.

In addition, Imagine Dundrum considers that Dundrum Village is an appropriate location for developing small-scale employment opportunities, and we would welcome, as part of the redevelopment, the establishment of a Dún Laoghaire Rathdown Local Enterprise Office, and a 'boutique' business centre with rentable office and meeting spaces for the increasing number of local self-employed people and innovative start-up businesses.

12. ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE.

Imagine Dundrum expects the Council's approach to all development in the context of the Local Area Plan to be underpinned by an ethos of social, economic, cultural and environmental sustainability.

Our submission highlights the huge opportunity for modeling exemplary environmental policy and practice in the public realm in the Dundrum context. Some of the proposals we urge the Council to implement and/ or support are:

- increasing electric vehicle use by provision of appropriate infrastructure;
- managing traffic to reduce air and noise pollution;
- reviewing and adapting all street and building lighting to minimise light pollution;
- introducing a strict policy for reducing plastics use in the Village area;
- implementing measures to protect waterways from pollutants in road run-off;
- protecting and enhancing biodiversity through reduced chemical use; *and*
- ensuring the new Village development is characterised by substantial 'greening' of the overall environment.



Summary by Imagine Dundrum, March 2019

Front cover drawing of 'Market Square' by Eamon Regan, B.Arch.

For the Dundrum *Issues Paper* and further information on the LAP process, see <https://dlrcoco.citizenspace.com/planning/copy-of-predraftdundrumlap-2019-2025/>

For Imagine Dundrum's full LAP pre-draft submission, and other information on our campaign for the best possible future Dundrum, see www.imaginedundrum.ie