

Imagine Dundrum Submission to the draft Dundrum Local Area Plan

Summary and Overview

Welcome for the Draft Local Area Plan

Imagine Dundrum welcomes the publication of the draft Local Area Plan. While regretting the lengthy delay in publication, and possible lost opportunities arising from that delay, we nonetheless believe that an LAP for Dundrum is essential in order to create a sustainable, modern, thriving Dundrum.

Imagine Dundrum's focus

The focus of our 30-page submission is on Dundrum Village, the centre of a growing population and the second major town in the county of Dún Laoghaire Rathdown. Specifically, we keep a focus on Main Street and the Old Shopping Centre (OSC), and the Architectural Heritage Area, and on other areas only insofar as their treatment in the draft LAP may impact on Main Street and its immediate environs. Our proposals for amendments to the draft LAP concentrate on the **principles, policies and objectives** set out in the report.

Main Street and the Old Shopping Centre sites: key LAP priorities for Imagine Dundrum

The LAP will serve as the planning context and framework for any significant planning application for the Old Shopping Centre (OSC) and Main Street, so its provisions for these sites are of the utmost importance. Having scrutinised the proposed policies and objectives for the OSC and Main Street (Chapter 2), Imagine Dundrum has made a series of detailed responses.

The Main Street is the area of Dundrum that most needs protection. To accord to Main Street its status as the heart of Dundrum Village requires that it has **its own unique planning framework**. It is our view that treating Main Street in the draft Dundrum LAP purely as the edge of the OSC site is not appropriate and needs to be revisited and revised.

A separate vision for Main Street should be set out in the Dundrum LAP, and Main Street should be seen as a focus for international-standard architectural and urban design responses to enhance this lively street such that it can become the iconic area of Dundrum.

This vision statement should capture the role of Main Street as a key location for social, economic activity and a vital space for people to engage. The character of new buildings on Main Street and how they relate to the existing heritage buildings, along with public realm improvements, will be a critical influence on the design of the future Main Street. The vision should be followed through with **a set of principles, policies and objectives for Main Street**.

Old Shopping Centre building heights

In relation to heights across the OSC site, Imagine Dundrum proposes:

- A range of 6 to 8 storeys be included in the LAP. Within the context of a **maximum height of 8 storeys**, the greater height can be accommodated along the bypass, having regard to the topography of the site. **Building heights of up to 11 storeys on the site are not acceptable.**

- We further propose a more consistent approach to building heights and block layouts on the site. Apparently random height and scale should be replaced with a consistency which can become a recognisable part of a new urban quarter within the Old Shopping Centre site.
- We support the objective that increased heights on the bypass or elsewhere on the site (**up to maximum 8 storeys**) must not have a negative impact on current or new residential amenity.
- In relation to heights on Main Street, we propose a **maximum of 2 to 3 storey buildings** along Main Street/Architectural Conservation Area, and disagree with the proposed heights for Main Street in the draft Dundrum LAP. Within the context of a maximum of 2/3 storeys in the ACA area, up to 3.5 or 4 storeys could be accommodated along the northern end of the current car park area, having regard to the topography of the site, but ensuring a consistent approach to heights along Main Street.

Land use on Main Street

It is the view of Imagine Dundrum that any response to Main Street in terms of land use should be of an international urban design and architectural design standard, with high amenity as well as visual value.

We do not support the objective that most active uses should be at ground floor level on Main Street with the implication of apartments only above ground level (while this approach may be appropriate within the site). In our view, uses with a large floor plate on Main Street can animate Main Street in a valuable way. Vibrant uses such as restaurants, late bars, ice cream vendors, retailers who stay open late, street market type retailers and cultural uses can make Main Street the Las Ramblas of Dundrum.

Land use on the Dundrum bypass

Imagine Dundrum supports the objective to provide mixed-use development along the bypass, within the height objectives already proposed earlier. The benefit of mixed-use along the bypass is that it can also provide for possibly quieter occupancy at evenings and weekends.

Permeability through the Old Shopping Centre (OSC) site

Any redevelopment of the OSC site should recognise the importance of permeability by providing legible connected routes, via multiple access/exit points for pedestrians and cyclists along North-South and East-West axes, thereby facilitating a relatively even spread of movement to and from the new development and to local residential communities, which will avoid isolating the development and ensuring its integration with the locality. The design of these routes should accommodate universal access.

The means by which links with the wider area can be achieved will be the subject matter of future planning application decision-making, should the current Hammerson-Allianz application be refused.

Homes on the Old Shopping Centre site

The DLAP should seek to ensure that people who wish to buy a new build home in Dundrum will have the prospect of doing that, so it is imperative that not all new units are for rent. We

acknowledge that Government policy does not give the Local Authority the power to set down requirements in relation to this aspect of tenure. **We therefore propose that at least half of the state funded affordable homes on the Old Shopping Centre site should be for sale.**

Heritage buildings on Main Street

Imagine Dundrum advocated strongly and successfully for key buildings on Main Street to be designated as part of the Architectural Conservation Area and this protection is now in place. Nonetheless, the Hammerson-Allianz planning application (2022) proposed to demolish certain of these buildings.

Imagine Dundrum welcomes the strong underpinning for the ACA in the Local Area Plan, and especially the objective that the Old Post Office building will not be demolished.

Other key objectives for the Old Shopping Centre site

Imagine Dundrum strongly supports the following objectives in the LAP:

- The objective for a 2,000 square metre **public park** on the OSC site;
- The objective that any redevelopment of the site should explore the provision of a **hotel** use adjacent to the local park;
- The objective to provide for a **supermarket** of circa 1500-2500 square metres within the land parcel, but it must be explicit that it should have **appropriate public parking**;
- The objective for **public toilets** as part of the supermarket or public park.

The requirement for a Master Plan

Imagine Dundrum welcomes the proposal for a Masterplan for the entire Old Shopping Centre site to accompany all planning applications for significant development on the site, which accords with the *LAP Site Development Framework*. This Masterplan can provide the basis for meaningful engagement with local residents and citizens and offer a means of building support from the local community. Such positive engagement practice, while not mandatory, should be strongly encouraged by the Council throughout the Local Area Plan.

Transport and Movement in and around Dundrum Village

In our submission, Imagine Dundrum acknowledges the wider policy context within which this chapter is located and translated into the policy objectives of the County Development Plan 2022-2026 (T6, T7, T8). The separate Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) has made recommendations for significant changes to traffic flows and traffic movements in and around Dundrum, including bus gates, new bus layover sites and increased cycling provisions.

The status of these recommendations is unclear, given the statement that the proposals represent the 'preferred strategy and interventions which have emerged from the ongoing iterative ABTA process' and that 'the final ABTA recommendations will emerge following this consultation on the DLAP'. In our submission, Imagine Dundrum calls for clarity about the status of the proposals, and the means by which final decisions will be made.

Imagine Dundrum proposes that additional parking to meet the needs for age-friendly parking, parking for people with disabilities and parents with young children, should be provided on part of the vacant land north of the Luas Bridge.

The Civic Centre

One of the founding purposes of Imagine Dundrum has been to advocate for a **new modern library, co-located with council services for the West side of the County** together with facilities for cultural and community uses. This we termed as a Civic Centre. In public meetings over the past seven years, there has been huge support for this essential community infrastructure.

We note and welcome the Council's commitment to advancing this important provision for the expanding Dundrum.

We also note that lands at Taney Cross area have emerged as a site, subject to feasibility, to accommodate the Centre in a landmark building. Imagine Dundrum has proposed a series of objectives that would need to be achieved in order for this tight site to work well. In summary, the design of a new library and Civic Centre at the Taney Cross Area, should it proceed at this location, must be of the highest quality, with design of an international standard which focuses strongly on the spatial, visual and coherent integration of the building in its wider setting.

Other matters covered in the Imagine Dundrum submission

Other matters covered in the Imagine Dundrum submission include a welcome for heritage protection and climate mitigation and plans, and for proposals for de-culverting parts of the Slang River.

In relation to employment, Imagine Dundrum proposes an additional objective: to **promote the temporary use of vacant premises** to reduce the level of vacancy in Dundrum Village, and especially within the Old Shopping Centre, as current vacancy levels detract from the vitality of the Village.
