



## DUN LAOGHAIRE CENTRAL RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

20 Sydenham Mews,  
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28th of February 2020

Administration Officer  
DLR County Development Plan  
Planning Department dlrCoCo  
Marine Road  
Dún Laoghaire

### **Re: Submission for the Pre-draft County Development Plan 2022 - 2028 Consultation**

To Whom it May Concern

We are writing to you to respectfully request that you consider our submission for the Pre-draft County Development Plan 2022 - 2028 Consultation.

The aim of the Dún Laoghaire Central Residents Association is to be a voice of the residents of Dún Laoghaire in support of a sustainable, inclusive, thriving community in which to live and work. Our mission is to provide a forum for the residents of Dun Laoghaire Town to work together on areas of common interest to effect change. We collate the opinions of the community, think of potential solutions and represent the community where appropriate.

The DLCRA started in late 2018 with a meeting of residents from different residents some of whom were members of various residents associations across the central area of the town. We canvassed residents opinions and started a number of endeavours to try and be a positive part of the community including restarting Dún Laoghaire Tidy Towns in 2020.

Our submission for the County Development Plan 2022 - 2028 is as follows, using the structure of the 'Have Your Say' document that was produced by the county council the submission is divided into sections.

#### **General Note**

We believe that Dún Laoghaire town as the county capital, which has suffered more than most with the changes over the last 20 years, needs a dedicated Town Architect.

A Town Architect could lead an inter-disciplinary team to take a coherent design-led approach to the future development of Dún Laoghaire and its connection to the sea-front and harbour, while respecting its historic architecture and heritage. A design-led approach would ensure due consideration is given to all of the matters outlined under the headings below. Towns such as Clonakilty and Westport are successful Irish exemplars of such an approach.

We believe that there should be a forum for open communication and cooperation between the main pillars of Dún Laoghaire, that are, the Council, The Commercial interests and the Community. The Development Plan may not be the correct place to assist in creating such a forum but we believe that such a structure would be a great benefit to the revival of Dún Laoghaire town.

#### **Housing**



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Many buildings in Dún Laoghaire town centre are of a scale and type that lend themselves to a mix of commercial and residential use (over-the-shop). More residents living in the town would, in and of itself, serve to animate and improve the town. Town-living is sustainable (walking not driving; re-use of old buildings) and improves trade (shop local). A number of successful examples exist. We believe DLRCOCo should prioritise, encourage and incentivise this and remove the planning and other obstacles that prevent it.

Following the concept of compact growth in accordance with the National Framework Plan and the RSES, Dún Laoghaire town centre is a logical location to allow for higher densities. Ideally there would be a Local Area Plan performed that could highlight particular areas as a blanket designation for the whole town would not be suitable.

All urban environments across the county need to be of a higher density to achieve sustainability goals while also assisting in making the urban spaces vibrant communal spaces.

Trying to locate nursing homes and assisted living spaces within urban centres should also be a goal.

Creating homes for people to live in should also be a goal and restrictions on apart-hotels, co-living developments and the development of vast numbers of 1 bedroom apartments should be considered.

### **Climate**

With vision and commitment Dún Laoghaire could be developed as a model sustainable town given its location, size, building-mix and transport infrastructure. This could involve re-use of old-buildings over building new where possible; encourage walkability by incentivising parking in existing carparks surrounding the town (harbour; library etc); provision of frequent electric eco shuttle-buses to move in a loop in and around the town etc...

There should be more recycling facilities across the county, specifically facilities that are easily accessible on foot. There are no bottle banks that I am aware of within Dún Laoghaire town centre, the nearest being in Glasthule. Smaller recycling centres for plastic, paper and glass should be much more common across all residential and commercial areas.

Climate action is a fundamental part of all government policy, national and local. There are many new regulations being enacted and the county council has an opportunity to lead by example.

Public workshops should be provided on a regular and ongoing basis giving information to the general public on ways to reduce the emissions of their houses. Practical ways that people can reduce their waste and energy consumption at home.

The planting of more trees should be pursued, including on residential streets and in all urban environments.

Planting should be mindful of climate change and flora that is suited to our changing environment.

### **People, homes & place**

Within Dún Laoghaire town the Lexicon has been a noted success, but the town is still lacking in community spaces and if the Boylan centre was to go it would have a severe impact. More community



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space in the town specifically and across the county in all of the towns should be considered were possible.

Following the lead of the success of the libraries, more spaces for study, meeting rooms, community education and to access facilities are needed. Community groups, particularly youth groups need assistance which the county has the resources to provide.

Cherrywood is an exciting new development for the Dún Laoghaire Rathdown and there are a lot of opportunities. In particular, new state of the art HSE facilities should be provided within Cherrywood to address the health needs of the county.

Lighting in many civic areas is a concern and acts a deterrent, keeping people away in the evenings and making empty urban spaces uninviting and off putting, particularly to older residents. The main street in Dún Laoghaire is particularly poor when it comes to lighting and should be addressed.

Promoting a mix of residents is important for a healthy society, socio-economic groups as well as age groups, making the towns and villages easily accessible and inviting places to be should be at the forefront of the Development Plan.

Supporting an Age Friendly county includes increased lighting, reducing antisocial activities, promoting community policing and enabling step down housing & assisted living within the town.

### **Transport**

Many visitors that come to Dún Laoghaire town still come by personal car. We believe that more could be done to promote drivers to use the car parks surrounding the town centre, in and around the harbour as well as privately owned ones such as Bloomfield. Visitors could be encouraged to park their cars and enjoy the town centre on foot.

Public transport is vital across the whole county and more should be provided, however in Dún Laoghaire town, it might be considered to move more of it out of Georges St to make the town centre a more enjoyable space for pedestrians.

The surrounding road, including Tivoli and Crofton Road and possible Queens Road could take more traffic out of the town. Upgrading and widening Tivoli Road should be considered, the HSE lands on Tivoli could possibly be used to assist with road improvements.

In new developments across the county, there could be an incentive to provide short term car rental provisions, (ie GoCar) more people are expected to use these facilities in lieu of owning their own car. Studies have shown that a single shared car replaces 8 private cars.

Again County Council employees can lead by example and maybe the county council could investigate opportunities with car sharing facilities.

### **Economic Development & Employment**

There is room for more emphasis on tourism with a focus on our heritage and facilities such as the sea and the hills. Our heritage is intertwined with the history of Ireland's largest minority group, there is possibly room for the tourism sector to highlight the history of protestantism in Ireland in Dún Laoghaire.



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Sea swimming within the county is fantastic public amenity and an attraction that draws visitors to Dún Laoghaire. The continued maintenance and improvement of the swimming areas in Seapoint and the 40 foot should be a priority. Indeed as sea swimming is a year round activity, at a minimum the council should perform water quality testing year round for the swimmers safety.

The enterprise office in the county council is doing a wonderful job. The Lexicon and its facilities are used by many sole traders and contractors and there might be room to give them more assistance or to use the library as an outreach facility or an ad hoc incubator for new enterprises.

### Retail

Facilitating the redevelopment of Dún Laoghaire Shopping centre should be a priority if at all possible. The site of the building is at the very heart of the town and it currently does not function. The location would be acceptable for housing as well as retail and commercial activities. If the possibility of a wide range of uses is stated it might help the redevelopment or refurbishment of the building.

The problem of vacancies in commercial properties can continue to be addressed by the retention of commercial rates. We believe this should be increased to 75%. We also feel that particular cases of owners evading rates on empty properties, such as Dúnes Stores should be addressed more forcefully if possible.

It is also necessary to state that Rates are too high with the county. More support should be given to traders, preferably a return on their rates by drastically increasing street cleaning.

Less food retailers in the CoCo markets, more arts and crafts. Maybe offering wooden cabins which are better for bad weather.

There is the widely held belief that car parking within the town centre detracts from the town and its retail environment. Many feel that on street parking charges have become a source of income for the council and that the town suffers as a result.



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### **Green County**

The green space on Tivoli Terrace South should be kept as a public amenity and should not be rezoned. Sporting facilities and or play ground, park, community driven. Not residential development.

### **Environmental**

Noise pollution will be a larger problem with higher density living and it is vital that individuals who constantly create problems for their neighbours with anti-social noise at high levels, particularly during the night, can be punished. If the individuals are in social housing it is essential that they can be moved for repeated offenses.

In light of climate change, flood defenses should be a focus.

### **Heritage**

Many parts of Dún Laoghaire town centre are rightly within areas that have been designated as Architectural Conservation Areas given their unique history and architectural significance. However, residents need to be positively engaged with this. Many are unaware and some only see a negative impact (e.g no off-street parking). A coherent and co-ordinated approach needs to be taken to the improvement, repair and maintenance of these areas. In this regard, the streets that are key but neglected arteries between the seafront and town centre need to be prioritised for improvement within the County Development Plan especially now that the Baths will be coming on-stream.

We would like to point out that the majority of the Victorian architecture, which is a large part of the towns character, is held in private ownership. The maintenance and regular improvement of the (public) heritage is funded privately by the owners. However no public assistance is available and indeed, conversely parking restrictions can make renovations even more difficult to organise.

Owners of houses and shops in need of renovation/improvements should be , at the very least , encouraged and parking restrictions relaxed to allow for skips ect without charge.

If the Dún Laoghaire Shopping Centre were to be redeveloped the design should pay respect to its surrounds as the centre of a Victorian town and should be 'soft'. The current development was a bold design and is regarded without exception as having caused much architectural damage. The ongoing negative effects of the design should be a lesson to all of the potential harm that poor design can inflict on a community.

The need for higher densities is a given and the shopping centre is a prime site for redevelopment but its effect in the heart of the town must be considered and any way to create a welcoming, outward looking street focused development should be considered.



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### **Special Local Objective's**

There are a number of SLO's in the current development plan for the town centre of Dún Laoghaire, there are a number of points we would like to raise.

#### **64 To improve pedestrian and cycle permeability to and from the former Dún Laoghaire golf course lands at Honeypark**

The pedestrian and cycle lane connections between Honeypark/Cualanor and the town centre should be given top priority. Enhancing these connections is vital to the future of the town.

#### **73 To retain the existing hospital uses at St. Michael's and to develop and upgrade the Hospital and Boylan Centre sites in accordance with the objectives of the Dún Laoghaire Urban Framework Plan and the pending Dún Laoghaire and Environs Local Area Plan**

As mentioned earlier the community facilities provided in the Boylan centre are vitally important to the continued functioning of the town. Any development of these lands/buildings should ensure that the town does not lose them.

#### **77 To prepare a Local Area Plan for Dún Laoghaire and Environs.**

It is our understanding that a LAP for Dún Laoghaire town has been discussed for over 8 years and there has never been one commissioned. We feel that it is vital for the future of Dún Laoghaire that a comprehensive LAP is undertaken within the lifetime of the next Development Plan if not before.

#### **107 That Dún Laoghaire Carnegie Library be retained for public and community use.**

Leaving the library to fall into disrepair and dereliction should not be acceptable. It is incumbent on the council to facilitate this building being brought back into use. It needs to be for community use and could be used to facilitate many objectives of the council in regards to enterprise, tourism and community.

#### **128 To encourage the amalgamation of shop units to allow for the creation of medium (150-300 sq.m.) and larger shop floor plates (> 300 sq.m.), particularly in the Town Centre Quarter**

In light of how the retail environment is changing globally, it might be worth reconsidering and changing this SLO. Dún Laoghaire town centre should not be trying to compete with retail destinations that provide larger chain stores. Smaller, independent, boutique retailers and hospitality suppliers are more likely to be sustainable.

#### **143 To encourage and support the Dún Laoghaire Harbour Company in the establishment of a diaspora centre within the Dún Laoghaire Harbour Area.**

We are not sure if this should be retained. A cultural centre would be desirable but a diaspora centre would not be unique to Dublin and may not entice visitors. An alternative focusing on the unique heritage of Dún Laoghaire might be more preferable.

#### **154 To encourage and support the redevelopment and refurbishment of the Dún Laoghaire Shopping Centre Site - in accordance with the provisions of the Dún Laoghaire Urban Framework Plan - in advance of the adoption of the Dún Laoghaire and Environs Local Area Plan (LAP).**



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The redevelopment of this building would be beneficial to the town as a whole. Stating that DLR recognises the potential for the site to be a high density mixed use development, might encourage the buildings redevelopment.

### New SLO's

The sports grounds on Tivoli Terrace South should be given a Special Local Objective to ensure that it doesn't get rezoned from *Objective F: To preserve and provide for open space with ancillary active recreational amenities*. These lands should stay in use for the whole community.

Kind regards  
Frances Kelly

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Chairperson  
Dún Laoghaire Central Residents Association