

Economic and Spatial Plan for Dún Laoghaire

The economic development of the town depends on more than just incentives to attract businesses. A holistic approach is required to make the town more welcoming to enable economic development.

The town needs more balance in its composition, both in terms of building usage, ie retail/office/residential & also in the type of retail and accommodation offerings. There needs to be a better mix of retail and a selection of different housing types available.

More needs to be done about the general cleaning and care of civic space to make it a town people want to live, shop and work in.

The DLCRA believes that if a vision of the town, including a brand, were to be defined, this would help the future economic development.

Taking the survey and questions received from KPMG as a guide we have elaborated on some of the highlighted points.

Shared Office Space

Residents are generally in favour of a shared working space solution or increase of such space in the town. There are some points raised about ensuring there is a balance and inclusion of non-commercial space, such as, space for artists, social clubs etc..

Linkage between Harbour & Town

Linkage between harbour and town should be essential to the future development of the town. How this can be achieved is not 100% clear.

At the very least the vision of Dún Laoghaire should incorporate both the harbour and the town. It should bring the two elements together and promote their unity.

This leads onto the idea of an actual brand or vision of what Dun Laoghaire is or aspires to be. This should be created so that there is something to try and achieve. How this vision/brand of Dún Laoghaire could be created is moot. The County Council could take a large part in it but it should really include all groups who compose the town.

In addition to creating a united vision/brand, the council can continue to promote linkage routes from the harbour to the main street, new pathways, new routes between Crofton Road and Georges St and also intelligent use of street landscaping/furniture and lighting to promote walking and travel between the two areas.

Streets & Civic Space

There needs to be great improvement, cleaning and maintenance of the civic space in the town.

Fundamentally, there needs to be more street cleaning, more power hosing of the streets, more regular bin emptying, more bin provision, more done to stop fly tipping, littering and dog waste. Solutions need to be found to retailers commercial bins being left out all day everyday in contravention of bye-laws and the dumping of household waste in public bins.

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Cooperation between the council, the businesses and the residents to try to address these issues seems to be the obvious action.

The town has an image problem and the first place to start, indeed the easiest and most logical, is to increase the cleanliness of the civic space to make it more appealing.

The DLCRA also believes that pedestrianisation of part of Georges St would be to the benefit of all aspects of the town. It would need to be 100% pedestrianisation to be effective. Access to the hospital and Georges St is available from Crofton Road where the buses could be redirected to. It is 130m from Crofton Road to St Michael's hospital, less than 2 minute to walk.

There is no point in doing beautiful street landscaping such as new Myrtle Square development if the council doesn't clean it.

Retail

DLCRA strongly believes that if there is a good mix of retail offering something for consumers, more people would do their shopping in the town. The current amount of empty retail units is evidence that we can no longer continue with 'business as usual'. Something needs to change.

The retail future of Dún Laoghaire will hinge on two types of customer

- A) Those who drive. They can be accommodated in car parking facilities surrounding the town, there are many underused spaces in the harbour, in Bloomfields, etc..
- B) Those who walk. The new residents of Cualanor, Honeypark, and new apartment developments along the coast. Their pedestrian access to the heart of the town should be a priority.

If a vision is created for how Dún Laoghaire brands itself and gives direction to its future development this might also give direction to the ideal retail make up.

For example, if a vision could include a specific identity, such as Eco-friendly Dún Laoghaire, or Dún Laoghaire Nighttime Leisure, or literary DL, Arts or Sea activities. Then the ideal mix of retail should compliment this vision. More restaurants, for example or more non commercial space for artistic purposes.

The concept of a Retail Curator is something DLCRA believes could be considered.

This would be an individual who could work to highlight what type of retail is missing, or what particular retailers would benefit Dún Laoghaire. A Retail Curator can try and approach such retailers and can offer them incentives, such as a deal on rates, or grants.

Ideally this would be a role fulfilled by the DLRCC LEO working closing with the Chamber of Commerce and Dún Laoghaire Business Association.

Housing

The economic future of the town is intrinsically linked with the residential environment of the town. Sustainable development, the concept of the 10 minute town, less commuting into

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crowded city centres. Current best practice in town planning and community development all show the need for a holistic approach to development.

The town of Dún Laoghaire needs to improve its residential composition to the benefit of all aspects of the town.

The town needs to provide a wide range of housing solutions, not just a predominance of 1 bedroom apartments that are being built to let. The only other developments consist of apartments that service the higher end of the market.

There is a need for affordable housing that can accommodate families. The town currently offers employment for many in the County Council, the schools, the hospital; it is very unlikely that any of the workers of these institutions could afford to live in Dún Laoghaire.

There needs to be a focus on restricting 1 bed apartments and a greater range of housing. Furthermore, the 'Living over the shop' initiative should be encouraged to return currently disused space to being used again, and providing more housing options needs.

Finally, if Dún Laoghaire is to succeed there needs to be more access to amenities within the town that are accessible without a car.