

ROBERT JONES

DUNDRUM

LOCAL AREA REPRESENTATIVE



Green Party | Comhaontas Glas

Senior Executive Officer,
Planning and Economic Development Department,
Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council,
County Hall,
Marine Road,
Dún Laoghaire,
Co. Dublin

July 21st, 2023

Re: Dundrum Local Area Plan Submission

A chairde,

Please find below my submission as Green Party Local Area Representative for Dundrum, on the Draft Dundrum Local Area Plan.

I would like to commend DLR coco and the officials who have developed the draft local area plan that sets out a vision for the continuing development of Dundrum and the wider hinterland including Churchtown, Balally, Windy Arbour, Nutgrove, Clonskeagh and Ballinteer, all of which rely on the range of amenities Dundrum offers.

I note the council have carried out extensive consultation with the public as part of the local area plan process and I hope that this genuine community engagement and participation leads to the delivery of better, more responsive services and outcomes for people in Dundrum.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Jones". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Robert Jones
Green Party Local Area Representative

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Urban Framework & Site Development Frameworks

I welcome and support the overall strategy for the built form in Dundrum set down by the urban framework and the site development frameworks. It is important that the parameters created by the vision, policies and objectives applied by this section of the local area plan prioritise designing the public realm around people, active travel, and sustainable mobility.

Life in Dundrum and the wider area has been affected by increasing car dominance over several decades. This local area plan provides the opportunity to restore Dundrum as a liveable space, the public realm must be redesigned to put people first and to make Dundrum and surrounds a pleasant place to live in with an emphasis on wellbeing and intergenerational engagement.

To improve the area as an attractive place to live in, everybody must feel safe to walk the streets and the health and wellbeing of the community must be addressed and enhanced. Air, Noise and Light pollution can all have a negative impact on health and wellbeing and anti-social behaviour can make communities feel unsafe. These factors should be given greater consideration in the urban design principles and objectives.

Developing Dundrum as a true centre for the area can encourage community and social cohesion, and these can be enhanced to create a safe and healthy community. The main design principles for Dundrum should support designing physical activity into people's daily lives through the redesign of the built environment and public realm in addition to ensuring Dundrum has adequate areas for recreation and exercise appropriate for all age-groups.

The objectives for street improvements and public realm should be expanded to include providing utilities such as public toilets, public lighting, and both waste

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and recycling bins throughout Dundrum to ensure that public spaces are safe, comfortable, and pleasant places to spend time in.

Green infrastructure and the protection and restoration of biodiversity bring a sense of place, improved quality of neighbourhoods, promote sustainable lifestyles and social inclusion, while encouraging exercise and play. The local area plan objectives for all public spaces should support ensuring opportunities for people to be in nature by providing appropriate seating and varied habitats either natural or man-made (i.e., ponds, marsh areas, groves).

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People and Homes

I would like to firstly note my strong support for the underpinning of the local area plan to develop Dundrum with the ten-minute neighbourhood concept. Compact urban living is an important step towards reducing carbon outputs while also increasing wellbeing. Facilitating town centre living in Dundrum offers a real opportunity to help support individuals live a sustainable lifestyle.

I welcome the focus on universal design and supported housing. These can help people age in place in their communities, and can even help families stay together, when affordability coupled with support, design, and planning help families with ageing or disabled members to cope.

It should be included as an objective that as the population ages, the principles of green and sustainable universal design be applied to create or regenerate neighbourhoods, where community healthcare and supported housing capacity grow together and remove or delay the need for people to be accommodated in congregated settings.

Animal-friendly, biodiversity-supportive, green, and blue spaces should be part of the design or regeneration of housing and neighbourhoods within the local area plan, for individual and community wellbeing, sustainability and mitigation of climate and biodiversity emergencies.

Objective P2 should be expanded to include the objective of specifically providing play facilities in the local public park included as objective OSC7 on the Old Shopping Centre site in addition to Finsbury Park.

The identification of the need for provision of a major community, cultural and civic centre for the area along with a plaza at the site identified at Taney Cross has the potential to be a hugely positive development for the area.

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Notwithstanding the above, the ambition for such a centre and plaza should be further expanded to consider the incorporation of the adjacent sites not currently in the control of DLR coco including the buildings at Waldemar Terrace, Usher House, and the building directly adjacent to the northern boundary of Usher House. Such an expanded site would provide greater opportunity for a truly landmark building with a wide range of uses including the potential to meet the requirements of critical community services such the Rosemount Family Resource Centre.

Adequate housing is a human and social right, interdependent with good planning, transport, infrastructural development, and land management. Housing policy should promote good outcomes for children, young people, and those most vulnerable in society such as the elderly and persons with disabilities.

The policy and objectives for housing in this local area plan should reverse car dependency and suburbanised development in favour of policy that renews town centre living, making it attractive again and encouraging the ten-minute neighbourhood concept - where all amenities are within walking distance.

The problem of homelessness locally is increasing year on year and the number of homes being provided is not sufficient to meet the demand. The housing that is made available is largely unaffordable to most. The pent-up demand for first time homes is increasing annually. The area covered by the local area plan has a tremendous potential to make an inroad in supporting the delivery of new homes where residents can have an excellent quality of life. This potential is reflected in the key sites identified in the local area plan where planning has been granted for housing or where housing will be planned in the future. It is imperative that this local area plan supports the swift build out of these sites to deliver badly needed homes as soon as possible.

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Housing developments within the local area plan area should be of mixed size homes enabling those who wish to move to larger homes and those who wish to move down to smaller homes to stay within their own community if they so wish.

It is also important that the local area plan encourages new housing development to provide for the inclusion of a variety of housing tenures as well as community facilities, workspaces and community gardens or allotments.

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Transport and Movement

It is of the utmost importance that this local area plan has the vision for a high-quality, accessible, sustainable, transport system serving Dundrum and surrounds, where most journeys can be completed safely, efficiently, and comfortably by walking, cycling, or on public transport.

This section of the local area plan should be grounded in the ambition of delivering a low-emission, efficient transport system to make commuting easier, to tackle climate change, create healthier communities and to improve the local economy.

Planning for transport and movement through sustainable transport infrastructure is much more cost effective overall and brings multiple benefits such as lower traffic congestion, shorter commutes, reduced energy use and emission outputs, increased economic competitiveness, and healthier communities. Bad planning makes for long commutes wasting people's time. It should be a priority of this local area plan to get traffic congestion out of Dundrum and the neighbourhood centres identified in this plan and make it easy to get to work and school on public transport or cycling. Pedestrian-friendly urban centres are undoubtedly the way of the future.

People have a right to be able to access public transport and public amenities regardless of their circumstances. The design of our built environment and transport systems should encourage inclusion and social cohesion by allowing all people to access public and commercial services, engage with and enjoy their communities.

A fundamental human right of children as Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child insists:

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"States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts. States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity."

A transport network and public realm that restricts the ability of children to move freely around their community denies them this fundamental right. Infrastructure that is unsafe for walking and cycling removes from children the ability to fully engage independently in the life of their community. This should be particularly considered regarding the proposed introduction of the bus gate on Sweetmount Avenue, and how this can be provided while maintaining the public square to the front of the Carnegie Library as a safe place for children to roam and play freely.

This local area plan should promote and prioritize a culture of walking, cycling, and increased use of shared and public transport. Pursuing such policies will reduce our carbon emissions, increase air quality, reduce noise and light pollution, and make Dundrum and its hinterland a more pleasant place for everyone.

This local area plan should ensure that all active travel infrastructure is inclusive of people of all abilities and at all life stages. New walking and cycling infrastructure should accommodate all types of mobility aids and children's buggies. Ensure all cycle parking includes provision for adapted cycles and cargo bikes. Remove any barriers from existing infrastructure e.g., kissing gates, cyclist dismount signs.

Within the local area plan area, it should be an objective to limit the space dedicated to on-street parking in Dundrum village and the neighbourhood centres while ensuring adequate disabled and "age-friendly" parking bays.

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As a climate mitigation measure, on street and above ground parking within the local area plan should encourage grass block paving systems or similar. During periods of high temperatures these systems are shown to have a significant reduction in the heat sink effect compared to concrete or tarmac therefore supporting cooler public space. They are also suitable to comply with SUDS.

The attention given by the local area plan to school transport is welcome and it should be an objective to reduce the negative impact of school commutes on traffic congestion, emissions, health, and wellbeing through better and more equitable planning and investment in active and sustainable school transport. Further consideration in this regard should be given to the plan's interaction with the Notre Dame Campus. Further enhancement of the walking and cycling access to this campus is required.

Section 4.6.1.7 should provide further specification around the security of cycle parking. Bike theft and concerns around the security of public cycle parking are significant hinderance to modal shift to cycling.

The proposed expansion of cycling infrastructure across the local area plan area is positive, however a highly utilised route from the St. Columbanus Road across the Luas track at Windy Arbour and onto Churchtown Road is needed and should be included in the local area plan.

Further consideration of the bus terminus location in Dundrum should include the area within the northeast of the Luas station boundary (fig. 4.5). This site presents the opportunity for the colocation of Luas, Bus and high-quality secure cycle parking and may create the threshold footfall to support the development of facilities normally associated with a busy metropolitan transport hub.

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Climate Action – Mitigation and Adaptation

It is evident throughout the draft local area plan that climate action and developing Dundrum as a sustainable place to live are a priority. Preparing for the existential challenges climate change is and will continue to present to us in our local context is a critical element of this.

Our rivers and streams are an integral part of our environment and if managed appropriately can significantly improve the quality of life for people living in the Dundrum area. It would be a very positive development to conserve and enhance the Slang and Wyckham streams through deculverting and the development of urban riparian buffer zones. These could present the opportunity of recreation areas through the development of linear parks.

Such development of urban riparian buffer zones can also have significant benefits in terms of managing run-off and flood mitigation. As our climate becomes warmer and wetter such measures are going to be essential in this area where the danger of flash floods is well established.

I welcome the local area plan's intension to prioritise the expansion of parks, green spaces, and other recreational infrastructure, for community enjoyment and biodiversity enhancement.

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