



# Placemaking

## Chapter 3

# CHAPTER 3 PLACEMAKING

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## CHAPTER 3 PLACEMAKING

### 3.1 Background

The overall pattern of development will continue to be shaped by this Draft Plan, through the Settlement Strategy and associated Core Strategy which establishes a spatial hierarchy for the County and in turn sets the background for the future pattern of growth. The Draft Plan supports the development of a hierarchy of high quality, vibrant, consolidated and attractive urban settlements. This includes the development of Swords as the County Town, Blanchardstown as a major urban centre, and Balbriggan as a large growth town. This hierarchy is supported by a number of towns, urban areas, and villages throughout the County. An integral feature of the County is the open countryside and green belt lands that separate the urban areas which help to define the character of Fingal, providing a sense of place and local identity to individual towns and villages. The maintenance of this general pattern of development is important for the sound and sustainable development of the County.

It is important to maintain this settlement hierarchy and physically distinct and separate urban centres, while creating unique character areas within the core urban towns and villages and associated suburbs, to help make sustainable communities and places.

Through placemaking, which encompasses a multi-faceted approach to planning, design and management, the Council will continue to ensure the development of sustainable communities by supporting the development of adequate housing, retail, leisure, and employment uses, quality public realm, community facilities, design and standards and open space throughout the County.

#### Statement of Policy

- Deliver successful and sustainable communities through the provision of infrastructure, adequate housing, open space, retail, leisure, employment, community and cultural development supporting the needs of residents, workers and visitors, whilst conserving our built and natural heritage.
- Ensure that the built environment is of a high quality design standard.
- Continue to attract and retain quality jobs that are well-paying and environmentally friendly. Placemaking builds the necessary foundation upon which new enterprises can be developed and can grow, creating lasting, sustainable prosperity for local communities.
- Ensure communities develop in a co-ordinated sustainable manner to create vibrant and viable places and ensure new development respects the existing character of existing centres.
- Provide high quality housing and residential areas in identified areas to meet the needs and expectations of all residents.
- Ensure adequate provision of accessible high quality open space and recreational facilities in the County.
- Promote adequate provision and distribution of community infrastructure in the County.



## Achieving Good Placemaking

Fingal County Council is committed to achieving successful and sustainable communities throughout the County. The Development Plan aims to improve the quality of Fingal’s urban and rural environments and encourage a high standard of design in all new developments. Adhering to the principles of placemaking will achieve accessible, safe and sustainable built and natural environments, which reflect the special character and heritage of the County and its varied townscapes and landscapes.

The diagram below demonstrates how placemaking and sustainable communities can be at the centre of our thinking in respect of planning, and specifically the Development Plan, illustrating the key characteristics that make for good placemaking and sustainable communities.



Source: Adapted 'Egan Wheel', Egan 2004

National publications provide excellent guidance on how to deliver quality neighbourhoods, urban areas and sustainable communities. These include *Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities* (2007), *Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities* (2007), *Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments* (2007), *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas* (2009), *Urban Design Manual A Best Practice Guide* (2009), *Government Policy on Architecture* (2009) and *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects – Guidance for Planning Authorities* (2009). This chapter consists of five main themes and each theme is key to achieving successful and sustainable areas. These include:

- Sustainable Communities
- Public Realm
- Sustainable Design and Standards
- Open Space
- Community Infrastructure, Facilities and Services



### 3.2 Sustainable Communities

Sustainable communities are those that are economically, environmentally, and socially healthy and resilient. Challenges are met through integrated solutions rather than through fragmented approaches.

The Draft Plan has a key role to play in enhancing and developing Fingal's communities and ensuring that our individual communities remain distinctive and ensure residents have access to a range of accommodation, facilities and environment in which to enjoy their desired lifestyle.

At present, in addition to established towns, villages and local centres in Fingal, there are a number of new mixed-use family friendly neighbourhoods and communities emerging in areas such as Millers Glen in Swords, Hansfield in Blanchardstown, Stapolin in Baldoyle and at Station Road in Portmarnock. These new areas will provide a wide range of uses and will act as a focal point for living, shopping and access to local services and facilities. As such the main aim in the development of these areas is the creation of a sustainable community which meets local need by providing a range of retail, commercial, leisure and residential use each with a distinctive sense of place for residents and visitors alike.

A sustainable community's success depends upon its citizens' commitment and involvement through:

- Active, organized, and informed citizenship.
- Inspiring, effective, and responsive leadership.
- Responsible, caring, and healthy community institutions, services, and businesses.

#### Characteristics of a Successful and Sustainable Community

Successful areas are places where people want to live, work and visit. A successful community is made up of many components. The most successful and popular places and neighbourhoods are generally those which:

- Include a range of facilities focused in a consolidated area with a critical mass of attractions and make best use of the already established investment in the built environment; these attractions include a mix of shops as well as a wide range of financial, professional and government services together with cultural, entertainment and leisure facilities
- Include a thriving local residential population which adds to the vitality and vibrancy of the area as it ensures activity outside of standard retail and office opening hours
- Are easily accessible by a range of transport modes including cycling and walking, have sufficient good quality short stay car parking close to the core area, have good transport linkages within the centre, and have efficient arrangements for delivery of goods
- Present an attractive amenity in terms of the built environment and streetscape, streets and public spaces which are considered clean and safe, and have a sense of local identity and character, all of which greatly enhances the attraction of the centre
- Have the vision and mechanisms in place to build on these existing assets, can overcome problems, adapt to both market and consumer needs and can secure appropriate and necessary improvements where required



## Sustainable Placemaking

Urban and village centres provide the focus for a wide range of activities that contribute to a sense of place and the area's sense of identity. These centres clearly have an important economic, social and cultural role to perform. The urban centres of Fingal have seen significant development over the years. The main priority is for consolidation in the existing centres and support of the existing businesses and activities in order to maintain vibrancy.

In urban areas, such as Blanchardstown, Swords and Balbriggan, this includes developing sustainable residential communities both on land zoned for residential development and in mixed use areas. Objectives will promote the use of appropriate residential densities dependant on location, the use of an appropriate variety and mix of good quality, well designed dwelling types and sizes, and the encouragement of infill and brownfield development to consolidate existing towns in preference to greenfield development.

The Rural Villages are a distinctive and valuable asset within the rural area with opportunities for the establishment of sustainable rural communities. Development Plan objectives enhance this particular community aspect and spirit by building upon unique and key strengths.

The social component of rural Fingal thrives on the dynamic interaction of members of communities who live both in established settlements located within the rural area and in individual (or "one-off") houses located in the open countryside. The development of these communities, and services to support their operation, is a key factor in ensuring their well-being.

The urban and village centres are categorised in a hierarchy of places and land use zoning objectives as follows:

Urban Place Designation	Function	Location
<b>Major Town Centres (MC)</b>	Main town centres of the County which offer a range of services and facilities to a large hinterland.	Swords, Blanchardstown and Balbriggan
<b>Town and District Centres (TC)</b>	These town and district centres offer a range of services, facilities and retail for their immediate hinterland.	Balrothery, Skerries, Rush, Lusk, Donabate, Malahide, Portmarnock, Grange Road (Baldoyle), Baldoyle, Sutton Cross, Howth, Charlestown, Clonsilla, Porterstown Blanchardstown Village and Castleknock.
<b>Village Centres (RV)</b>	These villages vary in function but generally meet the day-to-day needs of the locality and usually offer a mix of commercial and community activity within the village core. Other enterprise, residential, retail, commercial, and community facilities may be provided.	Ballyboughil, Balscadden, Coolquay, Garristown, Kinsaley, Naul, Oldtown, Rivermeade & Rowles-town.
<b>Local Centres (LC)</b>	These are usually small retail areas that serve a residential area within walking distance of these centres. Other services such as childcare and medical facilities may also be available with a limited amount of office space.	See Retail Strategy for locations, Chapter 6



**Objective PM01**

Develop a hierarchy of high quality vibrant and sustainable urban and village centres including the continued sustainable development and enhancement of:

- Swords as the County Town of Fingal
- Blanchardstown as a vibrant major town centre
- Balbriggan as a large growth town
- The network of town, village and district centres
- A range of local and neighbourhood centres

**Objective PM02**

Protect the primacy and maintain the future viability of the existing major towns in the County and develop them with an appropriate mix of commercial, recreational, civic, cultural, leisure and residential uses.

**Objective PM03**

Ensure each Rural Village develops in such a way as to provide a sustainable mix of commercial and community activity within an identified village core which includes provision for enterprise, residential, retail, commercial and community facilities.

**Sustainable Economic Development**

The concept of placemaking is critical from the perspective of enterprise and wider economic development. Creating vibrant, attractive places to live can enable key economic conditions such as attracting and retaining talent and incentivising Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and other investment. Government policy recognises this and placemaking is one of four prongs of the approach to differentiating Ireland as set out in the Government’s Enterprise Policy statement, Enterprise 2025. In support of this, a range of actions are set out which can ‘realise the potential of the regions throughout Ireland to contribute to, and benefit from, sustainable employment and growth over the next decade’.

**Sustainable Housing**

The strategic objective of housing policy in Ireland is “...to enable all households access good quality housing appropriate to household circumstances and in their particular community of choice”. (Housing Policy Statement, June 2011). In terms of spatial planning the overall objective in relation to housing is the creation of sustainable neighbourhoods. In Fingal this translates into the consolidation of the existing communities, already served by public transport and close to established social and community infrastructure, and the creation of new communities serviced by high quality transport links.

Presently there is a pressing need to facilitate a significant increase in housing output whilst creating high-quality accommodation to address a range of housing issues.

**Housing Strategy**

The preparation of a Housing Strategy is a mandatory requirement under the *Planning and Development Acts, as amended*. The entire Strategy is included as Appendix 1 of the Draft Plan.



Since the last review of the Housing Strategy, there have been significant changes in the economy and in particular the housing market. Given these changes, this housing strategy must evolve to ensure alignment between the strategy and the prevailing and anticipated environments.

The Housing Strategy assesses the mix of house types and tenures that are required to serve the needs of the County's forecast population and sets out a range of measures to address housing segregation and provide social housing including the reservation of lands for social housing. The Housing Strategy promotes social integration and facilitates a diverse range of dwelling tenures within housing developments, including social housing in a balanced way across the County. The Strategy also ensures that those with specific housing needs, such as older persons, persons with disabilities, homeless persons and Travellers, are accommodated in a manner appropriate to their specific needs.

The Strategy responses are based on the population and housing projections set out in the Core Strategy, the most recent summary of social housing assessment within the County, the *Social Housing Strategy 2020*, DECLG (2014), and the Implementation Plan on the State's *Response to Homelessness*, DECLG, (2014).

The Core Strategy projects a likely need for 49,536 additional residential units in Fingal over the period from 2016 - 2026. Consolidation and sustainable intensification in established urban areas and existing towns, through infill development and brownfield redevelopment, is a priority. The strategic growth area at Lissenhall will develop based on the capacity of the public transport network, social and physical infrastructure. The rural villages will continue to develop at an incremental pace based on the delivery of social, physical and transport infrastructure and services.

### Social Housing

The Housing Strategy forecasts that 1,913 social housing units will be required during the Plan period. There are 9,103 households on the Fingal Social Housing List (November 2015). This results in a need for 11,016 social housing units over the period 2016 - 2023. The targets for delivery of Social Housing Strategy 2015 - 2017 as set out by the DOECLG in April 2015 outlined a target of 1,376 social housing units to be provided by Fingal County Council. The Council projects that 1,611 units will be provided in the County during this timeframe. These units will be provided under various headings such as HAP, Part V, Construction, Acquisitions and by Approved Housing Bodies. Using this delivery method, the Council anticipates that a further 9,403 social housing units will be delivered to meet the projected need for the period 2018 - 2023.

Pursuant to Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) there is a social housing requirement of 10%, which will be applied to planning permissions for housing on lands zoned for residential use and mixed use development. It is the policy of Fingal County Council to increase the stock of social housing to meet the long term housing needs of those households on the Local Authority housing list. To ensure adequate provision of social housing across the County, Fingal County Council will work with relevant housing bodies and other relevant stakeholders.

The *Housing Policy Statement*, 2011, emphasises the restructuring of the social housing investment programme which enables the delivery of social housing through flexible funding



models. Accordingly, the Council supports the provision of housing in partnership with approved housing bodies.

**Housing for Older People**

The Draft Plan seeks to address the housing needs of older people within their communities, with the aim of providing a range of accommodation choices for people wishing to downsize and in turn to address the underutilisation of larger houses, particularly within more established areas. It is also Council policy to support the concept of independent and/or assisted living for older people. In this regard, the provision of purpose built accommodation or adaption of existing properties is supported. Furthermore, the Council operates three separate grant schemes for qualifying home owners.

In order to provide suitable housing for older people, the Council will work with other housing bodies and agencies associated with this type of housing.

**Housing for People with Disabilities**

Location is critical when considering housing for people with disabilities. Access to public transport and community services is essential. The Council provides a small number of specially adapted units in new housing schemes for people with disabilities. In addition it also adapts existing houses to needs of tenants with disabilities subject to resources through a grant scheme. The Council will support development which will provide respite and/or residential care at appropriate locations and zonings throughout the County. In all cases, development must be in accordance with the principles of universal design.

**Homeless Persons**

Fingal County Council will support the provision of homeless accommodation or support services throughout the County. Proposals for such facilities should not result in an overconcentration in one area and should not unduly impact upon existing amenities. The Dublin Region Homelessness Executive (DRHE) implements the actions of the *Homeless Strategy National Implementation Plan* and the *Dublin Homeless Action Plan Framework 2014 – 2016*.

**Traveller Accommodation**

The County's Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014 – 2018 sets out Council policy regarding the provision of Traveller Accommodation. The Council will, as necessary, continue to update its accommodation programme for the Travelling Community

Sites for Traveller accommodation have been identified on the Draft Plan maps.

<b>Objective PM04</b>
Comply with the Council's Housing Strategy.
<b>Objective PM05</b>
Secure the implementation of Fingal County Council's Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014-2018 and to review this programme if required and/ or deemed to be necessary, during the course of the Development Plan.
<b>Objective PM06</b>
Fingal County Council will support the provision of accommodation of persons affected by domestic violence.



## Energy Performance and Viability in Provision of Housing

The availability and affordability of housing is a key issue facing the Dublin Region at present. This Draft Plan outlines the policies and objectives for the delivery of high quality housing. This, together with wider market conditions, the availability of land, finance and the capacity of the housing sector, is a key factor in influencing housing supply. As indicated in the Core Strategy, recent housing building levels in Fingal between 2011 and 2015 dropped to approximately 650 units per annum. Research from the Housing Agency in 2014 indicated that an average annual output of c. 7,500 units is required in the Dublin Region's urban settlements.

Viability and delivery of new housing is a crucial issue. The Draft Plan acknowledges this and seeks to ensure that any proposals to increase residential building and development standards above national regulation and guidance are balanced against any potential negative impacts on supply and affordability. Similarly, proposals to afford greater flexibility in existing development plan standards will be balanced against potential impacts in respect of design, quality and residential amenity.

The energy efficiency and renewable energy requirements for the construction of new residential and non-residential buildings are primarily addressed in the current Building Regulations Part L (2008 & 2011).

Careful consideration should also be given to the adaptability of buildings over time, to enable the building stock to be retrofitted or refurbished to meet higher energy efficiency standards into the future. Further objectives in relation to energy efficiency, climate change and provision of sustainable buildings are outlined in Section 3.4 – Sustainable Design and Standards.

### Objective PM07

Ensure high standards of energy efficiency in existing and new residential developments in line with good architectural conservation practice and promote energy efficiency and conservation in the design and development of new residential units, encouraging improved environmental performance of building stock.

## Strategic Development Zones, Local Area Plans, Masterplans and Urban Framework Plans

### Strategic Development Zones

A Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) is an area of land that is proposed to contain developments of economic or social importance to the State. Within Fingal, Hansfield is currently the only designated SDZ. The designation of a site as an SDZ is a decision of the Government, following a proposal by the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government.

### Local Area Plans

The Draft Plan sets the context and zoning designations for Local Area Plans (LAPs). LAPs play an important role in setting the framework for the achievement of integrated and balanced communities within a specified area. They seek to provide the optimal development framework to ensure the protection and enhancement of the existing areas, key features and the environment within an area, while providing for a high quality living environment through the use of robust urban design principles.



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The function of a Local Area Plan is to take a detailed look at a specific area, identifying and analysing the various issues of relevance, before establishing and setting out principles for the future development of the area.

A Local Area Plan is made up of a written statement, maps, plans and drawings and sets out a framework and objectives for the proper planning and sustainable development of a specific area. These objectives must be relevant to the local area and consistent with the provisions of the Fingal Development Plan.

The intended timescale for the implementation of the plan must be stated. An LAP is a statutory document prepared in accordance with Part II, Section 20 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, (as amended).

As a statutory document, the Planning Authority and An Bord Plenala must take account of the provisions of the LAP when considering an application for planning permission for a development located within the area defined by a local area plan. The provisions of a draft LAP may also be taken into consideration.

The making of an LAP is the responsibility of the elected members of the Council (Councillors) who can decide to adopt, amend or reject an LAP based on the issues raised during the public consultation process. This process is carried out with the assistance of the local community, stakeholders and interested bodies.

A number of new LAPs will be prepared during the lifetime of the Draft Plan, including the strategic land bank at Lissenhall. There are existing LAP's at a number of locations and these will continue to apply and will be extended or updated as necessary. A full list of the prepared Local Area Plans in the County is available on the Fingal County Council website at [www.fingal.ie/planning](http://www.fingal.ie/planning)

The development of the larger area of residential and mixed use lands at Lissenhall will only take place subject to the necessary social and physical infrastructure being available and LAPs provide a mechanism to ensure that this takes place providing for phasing of development where necessary. LAPs prepared in consultation with the local community and other stakeholders, create opportunities to strengthen and enhance areas and when prepared for new green field areas, they provide the opportunity for the creation of sustainable communities and new place-making.

### Objective PM08

Prepare Local Area Plans for areas designated on the Draft Plan maps in co-operation with relevant stakeholders, and actively secure the implementation of these plans and the achievement of the specific objectives indicated.

### Masterplans

The preparation of Masterplans will assist in achieving quality developments in terms of, inter alia, urban design, structure, delivery of community/amenity facilities and permeability. The Draft Fingal Development Plan will identify large or key sites that will require the preparation of approved Masterplans and subsequent planning applications will be required to adhere to



the approved Masterplans. Masterplans will be subject to a public consultation process and presentation to the Elected Members of the Planning Authority. The use of Masterplans has not been confined to residentially zoned lands; Masterplans have also been sought for lands intended for other land uses. The Planning Authority considers Masterplans as an effective means of guiding new development and providing essential social and infrastructure in a phased and sustainable manner.

Each Masterplan shall consist of a written statement and a plan or series of plans indicating the objectives in such detail, as may be determined by the Planning Authority for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area to which it applies to include, inter alia, the following details:

- Proposals in relation to the overall design of the proposed development including house types and mix of housing units, maximum heights, external finishes of structures and the general appearance and design, including that of the public realm.
- The types and extent of any proposed development indicating how these uses integrate with surrounding development and land uses.
- Proposals in relation to transportation including public transportation and non-motorised modes, vehicular roads layout and access arrangements, loading / unloading provision, the provision of parking spaces and traffic management.
- Proposals in relation to the provision of services in the area including the provision of waste and sewerage facilities and water, electricity and telecommunications services, oil and gas pipelines, including storage facilities for oil and gas.
- The element of residential development shall include proposals relating to the provision of amenities, facilities and services for the community including crèches and other childcare services, community and resource centres.
- The facilitation of public access to the proposed amenity areas located within the Plan boundaries and beyond.
- To make provision for sport and recreational infrastructure commensurate with the needs of the development as an integral element of their proposals.

#### Objective PM09

Prepare Masterplans for areas designated on the Draft Plan maps in co-operation with relevant stakeholders, and actively secure the implementation of these plans and the achievement of the specific objectives indicated.

#### Objective PM10

Implement Masterplans prepared in accordance with this Draft Plan.

### Urban Framework Plans

The centres of many towns and villages have been the focus of major investment in terms of retail facilities, infrastructure and urban improvements. It is an objective of this Draft Plan to prepare Urban Framework Plans for a number of the urban centres as well as the towns and villages within the County which it is envisaged will include a programme of action to enhance the vitality and viability of these centres.

Among the topics that these frameworks will examine is a vision for each centre, the identification of areas where there is potential for change, development opportunities, provision for improved



access to public transport, a framework for urban design, and the integration of natural heritage and biodiversity where appropriate.

Fingal County Council seeks to guide careful urban improvement and to plan for appropriate future growth. These Urban Framework Plans will highlight:

- The distinctive character of the area and its setting in the landscape
- Current issues of the particular area
- The need for conservation, sustainable growth, consolidation, and the protection of the quality, character and distinctiveness of important assets.

Creating a strategy for sustainable development will deliver not only solid economic and environmental benefits but also will provide an urban development framework. The challenge of a successful Framework, through the identification of local distinctiveness, is to unlock opportunities and deliver a high quality environment, improved amenities and a better economic future. Urban Framework Plans will be an advisory plan with a long term vision for the future, which allows sufficient flexibility to manage change in changing circumstances of society, economy, environment and culture. It offers a vision for the area, within the structure of the Fingal Development Plan.

Urban Framework Plans will be developed in consultation with local communities, landowners and other relevant stakeholders, before being presented to the Elected Members of the Planning Authority for agreement.

Detailed Urban Structure Plans and Masterplans have also been prepared for Blanchardstown and Swords respectively and an Urban Design Framework has been prepared for the centre of Balbriggan. These continue to be the main frameworks for the development of these areas.

A Public Realm Strategy will identify and focus on the most pertinent issues facing the town/village centre and how the centre interacts with its community and visitors. These documents will be discussed later in this chapter.

**Objective PM11**

Consider the long term Masterplans prepared for the town centres of Swords and Blanchardstown to inform and guide development in these areas.

**Objective PM12**

Consider the Urban Design Framework prepared for the centre of Balbriggan to inform and guide development in this area.

**Objective PM13**

Implement the existing Village Design Frameworks prepared as part of the Local Area Plans for Ballyboughil, Garristown, Naul, Oldtown, Rivermeade and Rowlestown.

**Objective PM14**

Prepare Urban Framework Plans, where appropriate, liaising closely with landowners, developers and other relevant stakeholders. These documents shall indicate the broad development parameters for each site and take cognisance of permitted developments and any potential environmental impacts.



**Objective PM15**

Local Area Plans, Masterplans, Urban Frameworks and other plans and strategies will be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessments as appropriate and Screening for Appropriate Assessment.

**Areas of Disadvantage and Vacant and Derelict Sites**

Specific parts of the County are disadvantaged, particularly the RAPID area in Blanchardstown. The RAPID programme has allowed for a coordinated approach to disadvantage in the area.

The *Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015* aims to incentivise urban regeneration with a view to facilitating increased activity in the housing construction sector. The Act introduces a vacant site levy which will generally be an annual charge of 3% of the market value of each site on a vacant sites register which will be maintained by the Planning Authority. The Planning Authority is required to identify sites which are vacant and come within the scope of the Act.

**Objective PM16**

Identify and secure the redevelopment and regeneration of areas in need of renewal.

**Objective PM17**

Identify areas and recommend methods of small-scale urban regeneration in the RAPID area and other disadvantaged areas commensurate to the area and in consultation with the local population.

**Objective PM18**

Prepare a vacant sites register as per the requirements of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015.

The Designated Urban Centre Grant Scheme has been developed by the Government to enable investment in urban centres. The objective of this Grant Scheme is to contribute to the improvement in the development potential of Irish urban centres by investing in, and enhancing their economic, social and environmental conditions. This scheme will be available until 2020.

The €30 million Village and Town Renewal Scheme announced by Government will run over 6 years. Projects eligible under this scheme will extend to the enhancement of villages, small towns and the surrounding countryside. Projects such as greenways, cycle-ways, upgrading of parks and civic areas, public utilities such as street lighting and renovation of derelict buildings are possible projects which could qualify for funding under this scheme.

**Objective PM19**

Implement the provisions of the Derelict Sites Act including listing sites on the Derelict Sites Register and imposing the Derelict Sites Levy.

**Objective PM20**

Promote the utilisation of the available funding to improve and revitalise urban centres, towns and villages.



### 3.3 Public Realm

Fingal has a distinctive built and natural environment. The County's identity and sense of place contribute directly to its economic success and its attractiveness as a place to live and work. For Fingal to maintain and enhance its competitive position, it must continue to put its identity and place at the centre of its strategic activities.

The public realm has a key role to play in this process. It is acknowledged that a successful public realm is a component of a successful place. The public realm acts as stage upon which the life of the County is played out. Fingal County Council is dedicated to enhancing and improving the unique built and natural heritage that the County boasts and to provide well designed, sustainable places.

The public realm can be defined as those parts of the County where people can gain unrestricted access for the purpose of passing through, meeting, visiting and enjoying. It is where we come together as a community, not merely a place for functional movement. There is now a better understanding of the economic, social and environmental benefits that public realm can contribute to an area.

Public Realm Strategies will be developed for different areas throughout the County. A Public Realm Strategy is a guidance document which will focus on a defined area, usually a town or village centre, and will comprise many of the elements which make an area an attractive place in which to live, work and visit. These strategies will seek to strengthen and enhance the attributes of a town or village which contributes to the distinctive physical and social character of the area. A guiding principal will be to ensure that the interests of all users of the public realm are considered in a socially inclusive and holistic manner. While these strategies will be design-led, compliance with prevailing planning legislation and Development Plan context is required.



Public Realm Strategies have been prepared for Balbriggan and Malahide. *'The Heart of Balbriggan'* aims to transform the town centre into a vibrant commercial, social and cultural centre. The strategies for Balbriggan and Malahide are the result of extensive public consultation and will be used as a tool to guide the development of these central areas into the future. These strategies will continue to be promoted and other strategies developed as appropriate.

The agreed Mission Statement from the Malahide Public Realm is outlined below:

*The Council wishes to engage with the citizens, businesses and visitors of Malahide through an informal, open and flexible process to develop a Public Realm Strategy for the town. The project aims to identify short, medium and long term actions for the town of Malahide and will inform Council proposals and works for the area, as well as identifying areas or actions where the local community or businesses can assist in delivering an enhanced public realm.*

Agreeing such a statement will be the first key task of any Strategy. This statement will define and guide the process, establishing common goals and targets.

Public Realm Strategies will be developed by multi-disciplinary teams from within the Council and will include extensive consultation with the citizens of the town or village. A series of public consultations and stakeholder workshops will take place with a diverse range of citizens and residents. These consultations will be instrumental in exploring and identifying the best way to help an area reach its full potential.

Active involvement is considered central to any Public Realm Strategy and in this regard plans and projects that follow must be meaningful and beneficial to locals, encouraging buy-in into both the making of policy, prioritisation of work and increasingly implementation of individual projects through joint working and co-operation between different individuals or organisations.

The Public Realm Strategy will be a result of this dialogue and will outline a holistic approach to the development of the area identifying key short, medium and long term projects and objectives that can be implemented by citizens and the Council.

#### Objective PM21

Prepare Public Realm Strategies, where appropriate, liaising closely with residents and other relevant stakeholders.

#### Objective PM22

Enhance the visual amenity of existing town and village centres, minimising unnecessary clutter, and provide guidance on public realm design, including wirescape, shopfront design, street furniture and signage.

### 3.4 Sustainable Design and Standards

#### Background

Good design is essential if we are to produce attractive, high quality places in which people will want to live, work and relax. Good design is achieved by the way we arrange streets and spaces and how we plan the mass, scale and position of buildings within the landscape. The result is all the things we admire about our best neighbourhoods – a clearly defined centre, a place that is easy to walk around and feels safe, contains high quality buildings, attractive spaces between



buildings and high quality green infrastructure. Good design can give us a clear and distinct sense of place in which we take pride.

An overarching aim of the Development Plan is to create and sustain people-friendly places for the benefit of the residents and businesses of Fingal, whilst supporting developers seeking to deliver the highest quality design solutions. Investing in good design can create economically successful development that functions well and has a lasting effect into the future.

Every area of the County is different, therefore the rules of good urban design should, in so far as possible, respond to the characteristics, history and culture of a place to which they are applied.

### Energy Efficiency and Climate Change

The provision of sustainable buildings is essential to ensure all new developments contribute positively towards reduced energy consumption and the associated carbon footprint. New building design will reflect the need to ensure development occurs in a sustainable and sensitive manner.

**Objective PM23**

Improve the efficiency of existing buildings and require energy efficiency and conservation in the design and development of all new buildings within the County.

**Objective PM24**

Promote energy efficiency and conservation above Building Regulations standards in the design and development of all new buildings and residential schemes in particular and require designers to demonstrate that they have taken maximising energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy into account in their planning application.

**Objective PM25**

Encourage the production of energy from renewable sources, such as from Bio-Energy, Solar Energy, Hydro Energy, Wave/Tidal Energy, Geothermal, Wind Energy, Combined Heat and Power (CHP), Heat Energy Distribution such as District Heating/Cooling Systems, and any other renewable energy sources, subject to normal planning considerations and in line with any necessary environmental assessments.

### Design Criteria for Urban Development

There are fundamental principles that guide the design of all places, be they urban, rural, neighbourhood or community based. The general design principles, which follow, are rooted in sustainability and will provide a common point of reference for all new development.

Good urban design principles will help the delivery of high quality environments with a clear urban structure. Observing these principles will ensure the conservation of architectural heritage and streetscape, the promotion of high standards of architectural design for new buildings and the reinforcement of local identity and ‘sense of place’.

In recent years a series of guidelines published by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government have issued on the subject of urban design and, in combination, these set out an extensive policy framework. The policy statement ‘*Delivering*



*Homes, Sustaining Communities*, and its associated guidelines document, *Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities* (both 2007) provide an overarching policy framework for an integrated approach to housing and planning. The *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas* (2009) document sets out key frameworks to be reflected in the Development Plan.

These guidelines are accompanied by the *Urban Design Manual - A Best Practice Guide* which provides advice on the implementation of the policies contained in the guidelines. The *Urban Design Manual* sets out a series of criteria to address the range of design considerations for residential development.

The *Retail Design Manual* (2012) and *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets* (2013) also provide comprehensive guidance in relation to enhancing the public realm. The *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets* (2013) aligns spatial planning and transport policy, focusing on streets as attractive places to create secure connected places that work for all members of the community. It offers guidance to ensure compact, connected neighbourhoods based on street patterns and forms of development that make walking and cycling more attractive. Equally, the NTA's *Permeability Best Practice Guide* (2015), which deals with permeability, connectivity and legibility, has a pivotal guidance role in the provision of good urban design.

To achieve good urban design in developments, the 12 urban design principles set out in the *Urban Design Manual - A Best Practice Guide* (2009) should be taken into account in designing schemes. These principles are: Context, Connections, Inclusivity, Variety, Efficiency, Distinctiveness, Layout, Public Realm, Adaptability, Privacy/Amenity, Parking and Detailed Design. Every area of the County is different, therefore the rules of good design should, in so far as possible, respond to the characteristics, history and culture of a place to which they are applied.

#### Objective PM26

Promote excellent urban design responses to achieve high quality, sustainable urban and natural environments, which are attractive to residents, workers and visitors and are in accordance with the 12 urban design principles set out in the *Urban Design Manual - A Best Practice Guide* (2009).

#### Objective PM27

Have regard to the joint Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government's *Design Manual for Urban Streets and Roads* (DMURS), (2013) and the National Transport Authority's *Permeability Best Practice Guide* (2015), in the provision of good urban design.

#### Objective PM28

Enhance and develop the fabric of existing and developing rural and urban centres in accordance with the principles of good urban design, including the promotion of high quality of well-designed visually attractive main entries into our towns and villages.

### Mixed Uses and Vitality of Sustainable Communities

To ensure that development takes place in a sustainable and efficient manner, mixed use developments are essential. Fingal encourages a mix of residential, social, commercial and community uses in communities in order to enhance their vitality and viability. These uses are encouraged particularly, in existing under-utilised or vacant building stock. Such mixed uses



should complement each other and where this is not possible segregation of uses should take place. For example, a cluster of nightclubs and/or public houses which would encourage significant night time activity would not be complementary to residential use.

Residential uses in some of our town and village centres is somewhat limited. It is desirable to maintain an element of residential use in or close to town centres as it provides night time activity. A more substantial residential presence would add to the vitality and viability of the town centres and as such, proposals for the residential conversion of the upper floors of retail and commercial premises will be favourably considered. Any proposed residential use must respect the historic fabric (if relevant), whilst also providing adequate residential amenity. The development of a vibrant town centre, evening and night time uses is encouraged, subject to development management criteria including access, visual amenity, parking and protection of residential amenity.

The vitality of the Rural Village is particularly dependent on a dynamic framework which involves people living, working, and interacting for social and community reasons. A key factor which impacts on the quality of life within Rural Fingal is the level of community activity within the area. This community activity will be supported by objectives focusing on enabling the provision of commercial and community infrastructure which will allow community to thrive and prosper. A mix of uses is also considered an essential element of promoting life within the Rural Village.

Venues such as cinemas and shopping centres that will attract large volumes of visitors should be located adjacent/ near to high quality public transport systems and where suitable car parking can be provided.

**Objective PM29**

Locate different types of compatible land uses e.g. residential, employment, local retail and daily service needs close together, so as to encourage a greater emphasis on the use of sustainable transport modes.

**Objective PM30**

Encourage a mix of uses in appropriate locations, e.g. urban centres, village centres, neighbourhood centres.

**Objective PM31**

Encourage appropriate residential, social and community uses in town and village centres in order to enhance their vitality and viability and recognising diversity of communities and actively promote these uses in existing under-utilised or vacant building stock as a mechanism to combat vacancy in town centres.

**Public Art**

The Council will encourage and give support to proposals for the creation and display of works of art in suitable, accessible public places, in order to improve the environment and make Fingal as interesting and stimulating as possible for the local community and visitors. Large developments will be required to provide a piece of public art or sculpture or architectural feature, designed in consultation with the Council. The piece of art should have a relationship with the area. Up-lighting of public buildings, which should maximise energy efficiency, may be appropriate for certain pieces of public art depending on their size, location and the visual impact of such lighting.



## Design Criteria for Residential Development

### Background

The Development Plan sets out to ensure that an adequate amount of land is available for residential development in line with national and regional population projections. A key facet of the Development Plan is consolidation of the residential land in the existing urban and village areas.

The Council's Housing Strategy identifies the future need for housing in Fingal (see Appendix 1). The provision of a mix and range of housing types is essential to accommodate the housing needs and expectations of the County's residents. Mixed and inclusive communities, which offer a choice of housing and lifestyles, have been proven to provide a number of community benefits. Social housing should be integrated with private housing. Designing new residential areas at appropriate densities with a range of house types and room sizes is a key factor in achieving sustainable and successful communities which have a sense of pride. As stated previously, there are a number of national publications which provide guidance on how to deliver quality residential developments. These include *Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities* (2007), *Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities* (2007), *Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments* (2007), *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas* (2009), *Urban Design Manual A Best Practice Guide* (2009) and *Government Policy on Architecture* (2009). These guidelines relate to all residential units regardless of their type or location.

#### Objective PM32

Ensure an holistic approach, which incorporates the provision of essential and appropriate facilities, amenities and services, is taken in the design and planning of new residential areas, so as to ensure that viable sustainable communities emerge and grow.

#### Objective PM33

Achieve an appropriate dwelling mix, size, type, tenure in all new residential developments.

#### Objective PM34

Ensure consolidated development in Fingal by facilitating residential development in existing urban and village locations.

### Mix of Dwelling Types and Adaptable Homes

A suitable mix of housing types should be provided in new residential areas to meet the needs of residents. Homes, whether apartments, traditional houses or otherwise, should be adaptable to the life stage of those living there. The needs of a family with children are very different to those of an elderly couple. However, the basic structure of the home should be easily adaptable to accommodate these different life stages. Residential units should be designed so that they are easily adaptable in the future. Residential developments should include a range of house sizes and types to allow for people to remain in an area at every stage of their lives.

#### Objective PM35

Ensure a mix and range of housing types are provided in all residential areas to meet the diverse needs of residents.



## Residential Density

In determining densities, regard should be given to *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas* (2009) and its companion document *Urban Design Manual*. The Council promotes higher densities at suitable locations such as along public transport corridors and in main town centres.

### Objective PM36

The Guidelines for Planning Authorities '*Sustainable Urban Housing : Design Standards for New Apartments*' issued by the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) are required to be applied by the Planning Authority in carrying out its functions.

### Objective PM37

Encourage increased densities at appropriate locations whilst ensuring that the quality of place, residential accommodation and amenities for either existing or future residents are not compromised.

## Apartment Development

Apartment developments should be of high quality design and site layout having due regard to the character and amenities of the area. All apartment developments shall accord with or exceed all aspects of Government Guidelines in relation to residential development best practice, including '*Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments*' (2007 & 2015) and '*Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas*' (2009) and provisions of Tables 12.1, 12.2 and 12.3 - Dwelling and Apartment Standards set out in Chapter 12 Development Management Standards.

### Objective PM38

Have regard to '*Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments*' (2007) (or any update or revision of these standards) when assessing apartment developments.

## Other Residential Development

### Infill, Corner and Backland Sites

The development of underutilised infill, corner and backland sites in existing residential areas is generally encouraged. A balance is needed between the protection of amenities, privacy, the established character of the area and new residential infill. The use of contemporary and innovative design solutions will be considered for this type of development.

### Objective PM39

Encourage and promote the development of underutilised infill, corner and backland sites in existing residential areas subject to the character of the area and environment being protected.

### Objective PM40

Promote the use of contemporary and innovative design solutions subject to the design respecting the character and architectural heritage of the area.



**Extensions to Dwellings**

The need for people to extend and renovate their dwellings is recognised and acknowledged. Extensions will be considered favourably where they do not have a negative impact on adjoining properties or on the nature of the surrounding area.

**Objective PM41**

Encourage sensitively designed extensions to existing dwellings which do not negatively impact on the environment or on adjoining properties or area.

**Student Accommodation**

The Institute of Technology Blanchardstown (ITB) is the most significant Third Level Institution in Fingal and Connolly Hospital is also a major teaching hospital. There are other Third Level Institutions within adjoining local authority areas.

**Objective PM42**

Support the provision of accommodation for third level students in the campus of Third Level Institutions or at other appropriate locations with access to public transport, that are proximate to centres of third level education.

**Residential Care Home**

The term 'residential care home' refers to a number of different types of property in which accommodation is provided for people in need of care for various reasons. The occupants, usually in single rooms, have access to on-site care services. Care can be provided on a 24 hour basis or partial care depending on the person's needs.

**Retirement Home**

A 'retirement home' is a multi-residence housing facility intended for older persons. The usual pattern is that each person or couple in the home has an apartment style room or suite of rooms. Additional facilities are provided within the building. Often this includes facilities for meals, gathering, recreation, and some form of health or hospice care.

**Nursing Home**

A 'nursing home' is a facility for the care (usually long-term) of patients who are not sick enough to need hospital care but are not able to remain at home. Today, nursing homes have a more active role in health care, helping patients prepare to live at home or with a family member when possible. They help conserve expensive hospital facilities for the acutely ill and improve the prospects of the chronically disabled. A retirement home differs from a nursing home primarily in the level of medical care given.

**Retirement Village**

A 'retirement village' is a complex containing separate and independent homes for residents that are intended to be predominantly or exclusively occupied by retired persons who have entered into village contracts with the operator of the complex. The presumption for such retirement villages is that they be located within an urban setting so that services and facilities are accessible.

The Council recognises that the provision of residential care is an essential community requirement. Although there has been pressure for such facilities in rural areas, there is a



presumption against this type of development in the open countryside for reasons relating to sustainability, poor accessibility and lack of public transport, social exclusion and isolation. Best practice dictates that residential care, retirement and nursing homes should be located in built-up areas and should be located close to shops and other community facilities required by the occupants, and should be easily accessible to visitors, staff and servicing traffic. All planning applications for residential care will be requested to submit an audit of the available services that are accessible to the particular facility.

In some cases, residential care, retirement and nursing homes will be created through the conversion of existing properties. Large detached properties are often the most suitable for conversion, as they generally have more land around them for car parking, servicing and garden areas and are less likely to raise issues of direct noise and disturbance to adjoining properties. In considering applications for new development or the change of use of existing properties, the likely effect on the character of the area and on neighbouring properties shall be taken into account.

**Objective PM43**

Require that residential care homes, retirement homes, nursing homes and retirement villages be located in towns and villages for reasons of sustainability, accessibility, social inclusion, and proximity to the availability of services, except where a demonstrated need to locate in a rural environment because of the nature of the care required can be clearly established.

**Objective PM44**

Consider the existing (and anticipated) character of the area in which a proposed residential care home, retirement home or nursing home is to be located and the compatibility of the use to such an area.

**Design Criteria for Rural Villages and Rural Clusters**

The designated Rural Villages of Fingal are Ballyboghil, Balscadden, Coolquay, Garristown, Kinsaley, Naul, Oldtown, Rivermeade and Rowlestown. These are mostly traditional village-type settlements, and have the RV zoning objective which aims to protect the special character of Rural Villages and provide for improved village facilities.

The Rural Clusters have more limited characteristics, fewer services and a more residential focus than the villages. They provide an alternative to one-off housing in the countryside through the consolidation of rural residential development within existing small clusters. They will provide the rural community with an opportunity to choose more rural-style housing to that which is provided within the Rural Villages.

**Design Criteria for Housing in the Countryside**

The countryside for the purposes of this section of the Plan are those areas with the rural zoning objectives identified as Agriculture and Rural Amenity (RU), Greenbelt (GB), and High Amenity (HA). The reuse of existing buildings within the countryside for residential development will be encouraged.



**Objective PM45**

Ensure that new dwellings in the rural area are sensitively sited and designed and demonstrate consistency with the immediate Landscape Character Type, and make best use of the natural landscape for a sustainable, carbon efficient and sensitive design.

**3.5 Open Space****Background**

Fingal has a well-defined network of open spaces and recreational facilities that are accessible to significant numbers of the County's population. The increased level of urbanisation in the County means demand for all types of open spaces is high. Types of open spaces in the County range from small pocket parks to large regional parks such as the demesnes of Malahide, Newbridge and Ardgillan. The provision of accessible open space is an integral part of the provision of high-quality green infrastructure for communities and forms a core element in the Green Infrastructure Strategy for the County.

The Fingal Development Plan 2011-2017 marked a move from quantitative provision of open space towards a greater emphasis on qualitative provision. This Draft Plan continues this and incorporates five basic principles of open space provision: Hierarchy, Accessibility, Quantity, Quality and Private Open Space. In doing so the Draft Plan sets out policies and objectives for the provision of a hierarchy of high quality, attractive and secure public and private open spaces, ranging from regional parks and major local parks down to smaller pocket parks, private gardens and balconies, as well as intensive recreational, amenity and community facilities such as active Recreational Hubs and Multiple Games Areas (MUGAs).



Fingal County Council has recently adopted an Open Space Strategy, Keeping It Green. This document outlines a strategy for the planning, development and sustainable management of public open space in Fingal and brings together existing policies and practices and introduces new and innovative approaches to public open space.

## Hierarchy

This requires the design of open space and recreational facilities on a hierarchical basis according to the needs of a defined population and having regard to the emerging Green Infrastructure Strategy for the County. Table 12.5, in Chapter 12 Development Management Standards outlines the public open space hierarchy and accessibility standards. The standards allow the provision of a wide variety of accessible public open spaces to meet the diverse needs of the County's residents. For all developments with a residential component a mix of public open space types should be provided where achievable.

## Accessibility

Ensure as far as practical that open space and recreational facilities are accessible by sustainable means of transport namely walking, cycling and public transport, depending on the catchment of the facility in question.

### Objective PM46

Provide a wide variety of accessible public open spaces, including allotments, community gardens, permaculture parklands and sporting facilities, on a hierarchical basis throughout the County in order to achieve a choice of open space facilities. Best practice Green Infrastructure Guidelines should be used to determine the location and type of open spaces to be provided.

## Quantity

Provide sufficient quantities of open space and recreational facilities. For all developments with a residential component, the overall standard for public open space provision is a minimum 2.5 hectares per 1000 population. In general this shall be provided at a ratio of 75% Class 1 and 25% Class 2. In order to provide existing and future communities with adequate recreational and leisure opportunities, the Council will employ a flexible approach to the delivery of public open space and more intensive recreational/amenity facilities. It is the intention of the Council, however, to ensure, except under exceptional circumstances, public open space provision exceeds 10% of a development site area. The development site area cannot include lands zoned RU, GB, OS or HA.

### Objective PM47

Require a minimum public open space provision of 2.5 hectares per 1000 population. For the purposes of this calculation, public open space requirements are to be based on residential units with an agreed occupancy rate of 3.5 persons in the case of dwellings with three or more bedrooms and 1.5 persons in the case of dwellings with two or fewer bedrooms.

### Objective PM48

Require an equivalent financial contribution in lieu of open space provision in smaller developments where the open space generated by the development would be so small as not to be viable.



## Intensive Recreational Facilities/Amenities

In certain circumstances, where the open space standards cannot be achieved or where more intensive recreational uses are deemed to be desirable, the Council, at its discretion, may consider arrangements whereby appropriate intensive facilities may be provided in lieu of open space of lesser utility. Intensive recreational/amenity facilities should be in the form of buildings or enclosures, which may include indoor or all-weather recreational facilities.

Intensive recreational/amenity facilities are defined as any resource, usually in the form of a building or structure (but may also be a pitch, court or all weather playing pitch), which is used by a variety of 'not for profit' voluntary organisations usually to advance their interests in community, culture, sports or other similar group activities. Schools, churches, childcare facilities, health centres and credit unions or similar are not included in this definition.

### Objective PM49

Allow recreational/amenity facilities (indoor or outdoor) of a more intensive nature be provided in tandem with larger developments in place of the open space requirement, within a specified timeframe. Such provision shall be at the sole discretion of the Planning Authority. Such facilities shall either be on site or located within the open space 'accessibility from homes' specified in Table 12.5.

### Objective PM50

Ensure coherent clustering of recreational and open space facilities into a recreational hub arrangement unless a more practicable solution is demonstrated.

### Objective PM51

Require the monetary value of specific intensive facilities to be equal to or greater than the full cost of the open space they replace, inclusive of the development costs of such open space.

### Objective PM52

Require that intensive recreational/amenity facilities be agreed with, and given in ownership to the Council. The Council may directly manage these facilities and may grant management licences and/or sporting leases in respect of the operation of these facilities, and uses shall be consistent with the provisions of any deed of dedication to which the lands are subject. In areas which are subject to Local Area Plans, the general policy will be decided in the first place at Local Area Plan level, rather than when considering individual planning applications.

### Objective PM53

Ensure intensive recreational/amenity facilities are not used exclusively by any one group.

### Objective PM54

Consider in exceptional circumstances particularly desirable open space/ recreation/ amenity facilities which do not comply with the foregoing provisions, but only with the specific approval of the Council.

## Quality

Meet the needs and expectations of the user through the provision of high quality facilities. Different types of open space and recreational facilities meet different needs and therefore have different functions. Larger open spaces and recreation facilities should perform multiple functions i.e. passive and active recreational use.



## Design of Public Open Spaces

Open spaces must be designed to a high specification. Great emphasis must be placed on the quality of open space and details of the proposed landscaping, hard and soft, of these spaces will be required at the planning application stage. Public open spaces should be overlooked and designed in such a way that anti-social behaviour is reduced through passive surveillance. Potential for anti-social behaviour associated with open spaces and associated screen planting must be designed out.

### Objective PM55

Ensure public open space is accessible, and designed so that passive surveillance is provided.

### Objective PM56

Ensure permeability and connections between public open spaces including connections between new and existing spaces, in consultation to include residents.

### Objective PM57

Provide multifunctional open spaces at locations deemed appropriate providing for both passive and active uses.

## Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) can best be defined as offering a “total” solution to rainwater management and must be included in all new developments. Ponds, artificial wetlands and water features can make a positive contribution to the provision of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and to the amenity of an area. Properly designed and located SuDS features can be incorporated within and can complement the amenity and aesthetic value of open spaces. SuDS areas do not form part of the public open space provision, except where they contribute in a significant way to the design and quality of open space as defined by the Planning Authority. The design of SuDS is best addressed at a macro level and consolidated solutions shall be examined which allow for the aggregation of volumes in larger parks and open spaces rather than a fragmented and phased approach.

## Playground Facilities

Playground facilities should cater for defined age groups and provide for a variety of facilities and play opportunities.

### Objective PM58

Facilitate the provision of appropriately scaled children's playground facilities within new and existing residential development.



## Tree Policy

Trees provide both valuable amenity and wildlife habitat. Visually they add to an area, softening the impact of physical development on the landscape while also fulfilling an important role in the improvement of air quality in urban areas and providing wildlife habitats.

### Objective PM59

Protect, preserve and ensure the effective management of trees and groups of trees.

## Private Open Space

### Residential Units

All residential units be they traditional type housing or apartments are to be provided with private open space. Open space standards will set out qualitative and quantitative standards so as to ensure that the maximum benefit is derived from the open space.

### Objective PM60

Ensure all areas of private open space have an adequate level of privacy for residents through the minimisation of overlooking and the provision of screening arrangements.

### Houses

One of the characteristics of traditional type housing is the provision of private open space, usually to the rear of the front building line of the house.

### Apartments/Duplex

Private open space associated with apartments and duplexes is important to ensure a suitable level of amenity for occupiers. Balconies and terraced areas are the primary form of private open space for apartment and duplex type schemes.

## 3.6 Community Infrastructure, Facilities and Services

### Background

The provision of good community facilities and services, such as education, training, libraries, childcare facilities, places of worship, health and community centres, in appropriate accessible locations is important as they contribute positively to an enhanced quality of life. The Regional Planning Guidelines require Planning Authorities to adopt objectives that facilitate the social, community and cultural needs of all persons and communities through the provision of well dispersed and easily accessible social and community infrastructure.

Most of these facilities already exist in established urban and rural areas. However in some instances they are located some distance from the communities they are intended to serve. Generally it is beneficial for facilities to be clustered together within, or adjacent to a town, village or local centre. Clustering can also help to improve their viability as well as making them more convenient and accessible by public transport, walking and cycling.

The aim of the Draft Plan is to create a sustainable community offering a choice of opportunities to meet its needs and in doing so this will help foster social inclusion. It is also important that





new facilities are delivered in a timely manner in tandem with new residential development and Community centres or meeting rooms should be designed to be flexible and multi-functional enabling a variety of uses to be accommodated.

**Objective PM61**

Ensure provision of accessible, adequate and diverse community facilities and services in new and established areas to provide for the well-being of residents.

**Objective PM62**

Ensure community facilities are flexible in their design and promote optimum usage.

**Objective PM63**

Promote the clustering of community, recreational and open space facilities, with community facilities being located in local centres or combined with school facilities as appropriate.

**Objective PM64**

Ensure that proposals do not have a detrimental effect on local amenity by way of traffic, parking, noise or loss of privacy of adjacent residents.

**Community Buildings**

Community buildings give their local community the ability to hold a range of events that are appropriate to their area, whether these be sporting events, cultural or community/voluntary/ social events. Such centres are important in fostering and developing a sense of community and are an important focal point for the area that they serve.



There is a strong network of community centres in both established and growing communities which offer a wide range of facilities and services. There are approximately 26 community centres, operated and managed by local people with the support of the Council. In recent years a number of state of the art community centres, such as those at Applewood and Holywell in Swords and Ongar and Tyrellstown in Dublin 15, have been provided as part of the Fingal Schools Model. Here schools and community centres were planned and provided as adaptable hubs, offering a range of activities throughout the day and evening time. In addition there are approximately 32 centres around the County which are privately owned and managed by individual communities.

The Council will support the provision of such facilities where there is an identified need for such centres and, in addition, will support the extension and refurbishment of existing centres.

#### Objective PM65

Ensure proposals for large scale residential developments include a community facility, unless it can be established that the needs of the new residents can be adequately served within existing or committed community facilities in the area.

#### Objective PM66

Support the provision of new community centres and facilitate the refurbishment and extension of facilities where there is a need for such works. Such facilities shall be accessible by a range of travel modes with an emphasis put on walking, cycling and public transport use, while providing limited car parking facilities to meet anticipated demand of non-local visitors to the centre.

#### Objective PM67

Resist the loss of existing social and community facilities such as community centres and youth clubs or any sports facilities including playing fields, unless satisfactory alternatives are available.

#### Objective PM68

Encourage the development of multi-functional buildings which are not used exclusively by any one group.

### Childcare Facilities

The provision of childcare facilities is an important factor for economic and social wellbeing. The National Anti-Poverty Strategy 2007-2016 states that the provision of childcare is essential to enable parents participate in the workforce and to obtain an income that provides an acceptable standard of living for both them and their children. Quality childcare can also make a significant contribution to child development in the early years of a child's life. Currently Fingal Childcare Committee supports a childcare infrastructure of 364 early childhood facilities that collectively employ in excess of 3,000 early year's childcare staff.

Current issues in general childcare provision include lack of affordable, accessible community based childcare services and before and after school childcare services in urban and rural areas of Fingal, particularly in the vicinity of Swords. These services are vital in assisting people to return to work and to facilitate training for persons in long term unemployment. There is also increased demand for school age childcare and wrap around provision such as breakfast



clubs, homework clubs and summer camps as parents are returning to the workforce. While the Council is not directly involved in the provision of childcare services, the Development Plan seeks to ensure that sufficient facilities are provided particularly in newly developing areas.

**Objective PM69**

Encourage the provision of childcare facilities in appropriate locations, including residential areas, town and local centres, areas of employment and areas close to public transport nodes.

**Objective PM70**

Ensure that childcare facilities are accommodated in appropriate premises, suitably located and with sufficient open space in accordance with the Childcare (Pre-School) Services) (No. 2) Regulations 2006.

**Objective PM71**

Require as part of planning applications for new residential and commercial developments that provision be made for appropriate purpose built childcare facilities where such facilities are deemed necessary by the planning authority.

## Educational Facilities

Educational Facilities have an important role to play in developing sustainable and balanced communities as well as encouraging families to live in the County. Fingal has a wide range of both primary and second level schools as well as the Institute of Technology in Blanchardstown.

Fingal County Council will continue to work closely with the Department of Education and Skills to identify and procure school sites where a shortfall in school places is identified. Communication between the Council and different patron bodies will assist in allowing the Council to ascertain demand for schools that are based on very wide catchment areas or which do not use a catchment area approach.



In September 2015, a €3.8 billion capital plan was announced by the Government. This funding is for investment in primary, secondary and third level education facilities, combining the upgrade and extension of existing educational infrastructure and the provision of new buildings over the period 2016 – 2021.

One of the main educational issues currently facing the County that needs to be addressed includes the increasing numbers of post primary schools that are seeking permission to be accommodated at existing schools where existing open space is at a premium.

The Fingal Schools Model is an example of best practice in the provision of new schools within developing areas. Based on the school planning projections of the Department of Education and Skills, the Council identifies and acquires appropriate sites on behalf of the Department where schools with enhanced sporting, community and arts facilities will be built to the benefit of both the school and the wider community. The design of the schools can vary to meet community needs as identified by the Council. The range of enhanced shared facilities will include amenities such as full-size sports halls, dressing rooms, community meeting rooms, all-weather pitches and playgrounds. These additional facilities (which are over and above the standard specifications for schools) will be available not only to the school during normal school hours but also to the local community outside of these school hours. In the case of schools that are not part of the Fingal Schools Model, the use by the community of school facilities outside of school times is encouraged by the Council.

It is important that schools are located on easily accessible sites. Wherever possible, any detrimental impact that schools may have on the environment of the immediate surrounding areas should be minimised. Therefore, all planning applications for education developments, whether for new development or extensions to existing schools, will be expected to meet the Council's standards regarding quality of design, vehicular movement/ parking and landscaping.

#### Objective PM72

Reserve individual sites for primary and secondary schools in consultation with the Department of Education and Skills as and when they are required, using the most up to date statistical data, and in line with access to public transport.

#### Objective PM73

Facilitate the development of additional schools, including Gaelscoileanna and Gaelcoláistí, at both primary and secondary level in a timely manner in partnership with the Department of Education and Skills and/or other bodies. Such sites should be in proximity to public transport.

#### Objective PM74

Require new schools and other education centres to meet the Council's standards regarding quality of design with an emphasis on contemporary design, landscaping and vehicular movement and vehicular parking. Design of schools and other educational centres should also take account of sustainable building practices, water and energy conservation as well as air quality and climate change. Such standards are to be considered and demonstrated in any application for an educational centre.

#### Objective PM75

Promote and facilitate the development of existing and new third and higher-level education centres where practicable and in proximity to public transport.



**Objective PM76**

Promote and facilitate the development of outreach centres connected to existing and proposed further and third level education centres.

**Objective PM77**

Promote and encourage the multiple usage of school buildings so that school facilities are also available for use by the local community after school hours.

**Places of Worship**

There has been an increase in the number of faith communities in the County over the last decade and this has given rise to a demand for worship spaces. While civic halls and community centres may provide opportunities for public worship, faith communities which have a significant number may require their own places of worship. Consideration may need to be given to appropriate locations for new facilities, given the potential for traffic and noise related issues if located in unsuitable areas.

**Objective PM78**

Facilitate the development of additional places of worship through the designation and/ or zoning of lands for such community requirements and examine locating places of worship within shared community facilities.

**Objective PM79**

Encourage and facilitate the development of places of worship in appropriate locations in urban centres and proximate to residential communities.

**Health Centres/Services**

A number of public, voluntary and private agencies are responsible for the provision of healthcare facilities within the County, with the Health Services Executive (HSE) being the primary agency responsible for delivering health and personal social services. While the residents of the County have access to the various hospitals located in the surrounding counties, there are currently three public hospitals within the Fingal area namely, Connolly Hospital in Blanchardstown, and the more specialised facilities of the National Orthopaedic Hospital at Cappagh and St. Ita's in Portrane. There are 14 health centres in Fingal. There is a centre located in each of the urban population centres with 3 in Blanchardstown. The new National Forensic Mental Health Service Hospital has been approved by An Bord Pleanala on the existing site at St. Ita's in Portrane. The appropriate conservation and viable future re-use of the Protected Structures within the boundary of St. Ita's for appropriate uses is a priority of Fingal County Council together with the maintenance and provision for an appropriate level of public accessibility through the site.

The primary care strategy '*Primary Care: A New Direction*' published by the Department of Health and Children in 2001 promotes the development of 'one stop' primary health and community care services integrated under one roof. It was announced in 2012/2013 that four of these centres are to be in Fingal, two in Blanchardstown and one in Swords and Balbriggan respectively. Blanchardstown Primary Care and Mental Health Centre opened in May 2014. Corduff Primary Care Centre is under construction and Balbriggan Primary Care Centre has received planning permission.



**Objective PM80**

Support and facilitate the development of health centres, hospitals, clinics and primary care centres in appropriate urban areas.

**Objective PM81**

Provide for new or extended health care facilities where new housing development is proposed.

**Objective PM82**

Facilitate the provision of new health services in towns, villages and local centres, with good accessibility, particularly for people with a disability.

**Libraries**

Fingal has a network of 10 libraries across the County delivering a high quality service. The most recent library to open was in the Donabate Portrane Community & Leisure Centre. Refurbishment works have been carried out in Howth and Balbriggan libraries, and in-house enhancements have taken place in Baldoyle and Blanchardstown libraries. The network of libraries is supported by 4 mobile library vehicles which serve 60 locations per month. A series of online initiatives have also been rolled out to enhance existing in-branch services. These include the introduction of Wi-Fi into Blanchardstown, Balbriggan, Swords and Malahide, an eBook lending service, an online education service, and the development of a Library App which allows users to find a book, reserve, borrow or renew books from their mobile device.

Fingal County Council will continue to expand and develop this service subject to need and available resources.

**Objective PM83**

Continue to support the development of the existing library service and provide for an expanded service and network subject to need and the availability of resources.

**Art and Cultural Facilities**

Fingal has a rich and living cultural heritage and a strong cultural identity, including its sport, literature and music. It is important for the identity of the County and its population that this culture be protected and promoted. The Council is lead partner in the two key cultural facilities in the County: the Seamus Ennis Cultural Centre in Naul and the Draiocht in Blanchardstown. These centres play an important part in facilitating the growth and development of the Arts



within Fingal and are supplemented by activities taking place within community centres/rooms throughout the County.

The Council through its Arts Office seeks to promote the cultural life of the County and increase accessibility to arts and culture facilities for all members of the community. This aim will be achieved through both the retention of existing facilities and the introduction of new facilities. The location of such facilities in towns, districts and other areas with higher levels of public transport accessibility, together with a diverse range of complementary uses, can make a significant contribution to the vitality and viability of urban areas and the aims of sustainable development.

**Objective PM84**

Encourage the provision of new or improved arts and cultural facilities in Fingal, particularly in parts of the County where there is a deficiency in such provision.

**Objective PM85**

Actively foster and promote the arts in order to preserve and develop the unique history and heritage of the County.

**Objective PM86**

Ensure that facilities where possible are accessible by public as well as private transport.

**Burial Grounds**

Local Authorities have a statutory responsibility to provide for burial facilities. Many of the existing burial grounds within the County have reached or are nearing full capacity. Therefore, it will be necessary to provide additional burial grounds within the County over the next number of years.

**Objective PM87**

Provide and facilitate the development of additional burial grounds, including green graveyards / natural burial grounds in areas across Fingal as required during the life of the Development Plan and which preferably have good public transport links, taking cognisance of the needs of multi-faith and non-religious communities.

**Objective PM88**

Ensure burial grounds are managed and maintained in a manner which respects their cultural heritage and which provides safety and universal access.

**Fire Stations**

The Council will continue to support the development and upgrading of the fire service in conjunction with Dublin City Council who act as the lead authority in the provision of the regional fire service.

**Objective PM89**

Continue to support the provision of a modern and efficient fire service as required and in conjunction with the regional fire brigade strategy.



