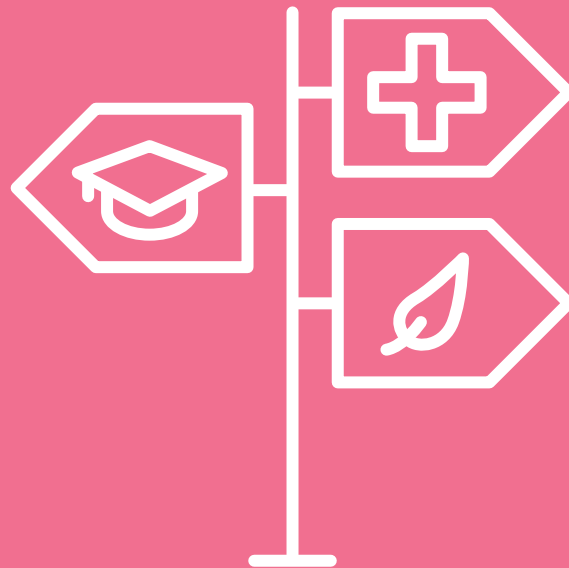


COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE AND OPEN SPACE



DRAFT PLAN FEBRUARY 2022

FINGAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2023-2029

4.1 Introduction

Healthy placemaking is a key ambition of this Plan and National and Regional policy place a strong emphasis on the need to create urban areas that are well-designed, resilient to change and which provide for high-quality public spaces which add character to an area and which are accessible to all. *The Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines 2009* define sustainable communities as “areas where an efficient use of land, high quality urban design and effective integration in the provision of physical and social infrastructure such as public transport, schools, amenities and other facilities combine to create places where people want to live”.

While healthy placemaking is discussed in detail in Chapter 3 Sustainable Placemaking and Quality Homes, it is a key factor in delivering successful and sustainable development within the County and is particularly relevant in the provision of community infrastructure and open space. Community or social infrastructure includes facilities, services, places and spaces that provide a community with their social needs. The provision in appropriate accessible locations of good community infrastructure, such as education, sports and recreational facilities, libraries, childcare facilities, places of worship, health and community centres, is vital as it contributes positively to enhanced quality of life. The physical appearance of these facilities can also have a defining role in an area, strengthening the sense of identity and character.

This chapter sets out the policy context by which community infrastructure and open space is guided. A brief of Fingal's community infrastructure and open space is provided in Section 2. Section 3 of the chapter outlines the opportunities in the County and the strategic aims are provided in Section 4. The final section, Section 5, details the strategic policies and objectives which will form the basis for community infrastructure and open space provision for the lifetime of this Plan. This chapter is in accordance with National, Regional and local economic development policies and objectives.

4.2 Context

The provision and access to locally based community infrastructure and essential services, which are central to our health and wellbeing, is vital for a community to thrive, to engender a sense of place, ensure social inclusion and build resilience. The Council will continue to support the work of both council and non-council owned community centres in recognising the important role they play for citizens in the county. Ideally, services and facilities which improve quality of life for residents of an area should be provided within close proximity of homes and within neighbourhoods to facilitate greater access and opportunity for local people. These facilities must also be relevant to the community's needs. In addition, making these facilities accessible to all and by sustainable transport means is also encouraged. The Plan has a key role to play in enhancing and developing healthy, sustainable and inclusive communities by ensuring that residents have access to a range of accommodation options, quality facilities and healthy environments which in turn help to foster and strengthen local identity and community spirit.

While many of these services already exist in established urban and rural areas, it is important that new facilities are located close to the communities they intend to serve, and clustering and multi-functional uses will be encouraged where appropriate. Community infrastructure can be provided by the public and private

sectors and in some cases by the communities themselves. While the Council and other public bodies provide much of the community infrastructure in the County, it is also the responsibility of developers, frequently as part of larger mixed-use or residential schemes, to provide appropriate facilities such as childcare, sports, recreation, play and healthcare facilities.

The Council is involved in the delivery, funding and operation of many community facilities throughout the County and works collaboratively with Boards of Management in existing community facilities to secure funding for additional facilities which can be used by schools during the day and by the community outside of school hours. Examples of facilities where this collaboration has been successful is Mulhuddart Community Centre, Donabate/Portrane Community Centre, Mountview Youth Centre and Parslickstown House. Community campus models, whereby facilities are grouped together and managed in clusters, creating enhanced synergies and greater efficiencies. In Mulhuddart, the Council is exploring the possibility of extending the Mulhuddart Community Centre to maximise local community facilities in the area. This would ensure that the new residents would enjoy the provision of a state-of-the-art community centre as they move into their new community.

A successful community is made up of many components, the result being a place where people want to live, work and visit. National and Regional guidance focuses on compact growth and the need for urban and village centres to provide the focus for a wide range of activities, contributing to a sense of place and identity. Many towns, villages and neighbourhoods within Fingal have seen significant population growth and expansion over recent years. Such centres have an important economic, social and cultural role to perform, and it is a priority for the Council to consolidate development in existing centres, thereby supporting businesses and activities in order to maintain vibrancy. The Council will continue to provide community infrastructure to meet the demands of the County's increasing population and will build on significant investment in Fingal's social infrastructure, including the provision and expansion of services such as healthcare, education, community facilities, libraries, recreational facilities, public parks, heritage restoration projects and playgrounds.

In addition, the importance of accessible, high-quality public open space to Fingal's residents is widely acknowledged. The County's regional parks within the historic demesnes of Malahide, Newbridge and Ardgillan and parks such as Millennium Park and St. Catherine's Park and smaller neighbourhood and pocket parks are an invaluable resource for so many in recent times. The provision of new parks and the upgrading of existing open space is continuously reviewed by the Council. Good design principles of multi-functionality, inclusivity, accessibility as well as active and passive surveillance are key factors in the design of new parks, playgrounds, and open spaces. Initiatives to promote the use of outdoor recreation, health and well-being and general enjoyment of Fingal's many and varied open spaces is supported by the Council. The high quality of Fingal's parks is recognised in the awarding of Green Flag status to Ardgillan Demesne, Malahide Demesne, Millennium Park, Newbridge House and Farm, Santry Demesne and St. Catherine's Park for exceeding environmental standards in green space management and excellence in visitor attractions. New park facilities including the first phase of the Rogerstown Park, Lusk as well as the completion of major restoration works at Shackleton Gardens, Clonsilla and the delivery of new playgrounds at Bremore Balbriggan, Skerries Town Park, Lusk Village, Glebe Park, Balrothery and new skateparks in Balbriggan and Skerries are providing invaluable facilities to local communities.



4.3 Opportunities

The Council acknowledges that the provision of good quality and multi-functional social and community infrastructure in existing and newly developing areas is a key element in the development of successful and sustainable communities. The need to collaborate with all relevant stakeholders to ensure that community and social infrastructure is provided in a timely manner in line with residential development is also a key factor.

Equally, the provision of community services and facilitation of a range of social infrastructure in the correct locations is important in realising the sustainable growth of our settlements and in limiting the need for unnecessary travel, thereby contributing positively to climate change. This includes the identification of appropriate sites for schools, libraries, community facilities, as well as the inclusion of objectives within the Plan to secure the delivery of childcare facilities and other supports for children and families.

The Council recognises the wide range of benefits accruing to communities through the provision of high-quality public open spaces and opportunities to expand and improve on such spaces throughout the County. *“Keeping it Green”, An Open Space Strategy for Fingal* provides a vision for the planning, development and sustainable management of our open spaces which will ensure high quality and sustainable spaces are provided throughout the County.

Community and stakeholder engagement is paramount in the provision of community facilities, including open space. Non-statutory and statutory consultation will be employed by all relevant Council Departments in proposing, planning and delivering community infrastructure and public engagement and contributions is vital to successful outcomes.

As the County's population grows, there is a responsibility and opportunity for the Council to ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable in our communities are met, including across the different age groups. The Council is committed to developing a more socially inclusive society and promoting participation and access for all. In Fingal, a number of plans and strategies have been developed to foster social inclusion in our communities. These include:

- **Fingal Local Economic and Community Plan 2016–2020**, which is designed to promote and support the local economic and community development of Fingal over the period 2016-2021. The Plan includes a range of actions designed to foster economic growth in the County over the medium-term.
- **Fingal Age Friendly Strategy 2018–2023**, in conjunction with Fingal Age Friendly Alliance, is committed to enhancing the quality of life of older people by guiding and coordinating the strategic development of Fingal as an age friendly County, through the development and oversight of cross-sectoral age-friendly initiatives.
- **Migrant Integration & Social Cohesion Strategy 2019–2024**, which aims to support inclusive and cohesive communities, where all who live, work and visit are valued, and all residents are enabled to fully participate and contribute to their communities, irrespective of their nationality, ethnicity, religious or cultural background.

- **Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019–2024**, which highlights the need to maximise usage of existing resources including occupancy of existing accommodation, management and maintenance of existing sites and establishing structures to encourage greater resident participation in building active and inclusive communities.
- **Fingal Public Participation Network (PPN)**, which is a network of community, voluntary, social inclusion and environmental organisations, working to build a better County for the community of Fingal.
- **Social Inclusion Community and Activation Programme (SICAP)**, which provides funding to tackle poverty and social exclusion through local engagement and partnerships between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies.
- **Fingal Comhairle na nÓg**, the recognised youth council for consulting on the development of policies relevant to young people.

There are also several other plans and strategies that have been developed by the Council to provide mechanisms for future opportunities in community development throughout the County. These include:

- **Fingal Community Development Office Strategy/ Vision Statement 2019–2021**
Seeks to guide and ensure the continued delivery of focused and appropriate community development work in Fingal. This strategy specifically identifies mechanisms to support community facilities to enhance wellbeing and meet the changing needs of communities. Key goals include the following:
 - Develop and improve community facilities
 - Support the development of the community facilities network
 - Develop suitable structures to manage Council community facilities
- **Healthy Fingal Strategic Plan 2021–2025** – Sets out to support the implementation of Healthy Ireland across Fingal by addressing health inequalities. It identifies 19 actions, corresponding to the five pillars of the National Healthy Ireland Strategy. Together these actions provide a roadmap for improving health in Fingal.
- **Flemington Community Research Project** – Liveability and Flemington: An analysis of the issues of most concern to the community in the hinterland of Flemington Community Centre, Balbriggan and to identify the issues experienced by residents living around the Flemington Community Centre, to analyse them and to provide a range of recommendations to efficiently address the mentioned issues.
- **Tyrrelstown, Our Future** – A report on the needs of the Tyrrelstown Community.
- **2017 Mulhuddart Strategic Development and Implementation Plan, A Plan for Mulhuddart** – Seeks the development of a collaborative and prioritised approach to Service Provision and Community Development work in the Mulhuddart area.

- **Sports and Recreation Facilities Audit – for the local electoral areas of Balbriggan, Swords, Rush-Lusk, February 2021** – The aim of the audit was to develop a comprehensive overview of the existing provision of recreation, leisure and sports facilities within the study area, in order to determine recreational priorities for the study area and demonstrate commitment, cooperation and shared vision in developing equitable, accessible sport and recreational opportunities for all.

The Council also recognises the work/studies that local communities carry out and these form another valuable source of information utilised by the Council in the provision of community infrastructure and services. For example, the *“Lusk Vision 2030: Lusk for Life”* is a unique community-led action plan for Lusk town.

4.4 Strategic Aims

The policies and objectives of the Plan must be consistent with National and Regional policy. In this regard, policies and objectives relating to the provision of community facilities such as childcare, education, health, recreational and social facilities, including the overarching theme of social inclusion are very much to the forefront of Government policy at national level and regional level.

4.4.1 Social Inclusion

Social inclusion is a key objective at national, regional and local level when planning for our communities. The ultimate aim of social inclusion is enabling participation in the mainstream of society for all those who desire it. Creating a more socially inclusive and cohesive society by alleviating social exclusion, poverty and deprivation is a major challenge. Steps taken towards this can include the provision of recreational and community infrastructure and improving access to information and resources. This infrastructure should meet the social, health and educational needs of the community. Social inclusion is embedded in the Plan with policies in particular, focused on improving access for all groups within society, impacting positively on the lives of citizens. There are key groups within society which must be considered when planning and designing our communities and providing social and community facilities. These include for example, children and younger people, older people, persons with disabilities, new ethnic communities and the Traveller community.

This Plan seeks to contribute to the creation of a more socially inclusive, equal and culturally diverse society by providing for appropriate community infrastructure, quality public realm and improving access to information and resources. This is in line with the requirements of NPO 28 of the National Planning Framework (NPF) which requires Councils to “plan for a more diverse and socially inclusive society that targets equality of opportunity and a better quality of life for all citizens, through improved integration and greater accessibility in the delivery of sustainable communities and the provision of associated services”.

4.4.2 Provision of community and social infrastructure

Through placemaking, which is advocated in the NPF and the RSES, 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. The need for community infrastructure to be accessible and inclusive for a range of users is a priority and is supported by the RSES. RPO 9.14 which specifically states that “Local Authorities shall seek to support the planned provision of easily accessible social, community, cultural and recreational facilities and ensure that all communities have access to a range of facilities that meet the needs of the communities they serve”. Through compact growth and in line with the Core Strategy set out in Chapter 2, the provision of key social infrastructure such as quality childcare, education and health services will be provided at locations where they are required most in accordance with NSO 10 of the NPF. The Council will continue to provide a diverse, network of attractive, sustainably managed open spaces to enhance the quality of life of the citizens of Fingal.

4.4.3 Stakeholder and Community Engagement

Fingal County Council will continue to engage with public and private stakeholders, such as developers, Government and other key agencies to ensure the effective and timely provision of community infrastructure. The Council is also committed to supporting voluntary and community groups to take a leading role in the management and operation of their local community facilities.

4.4.4 Climate action

In order to mitigate and reduce the effects of climate change, the Council will continue to ensure the provision of community infrastructure and open space at locations which are accessible by active travel, including walking or cycling and which are close to transport routes. This will reduce the need to drive to access services and facilities. In addition, Fingal County Council has launched “Fingal's Keen To Be Green Facilities Project” which will see community facilities from around Fingal take part in a 5-stage plan to become sustainable and take action against the effects of climate change. The project is a collaboration between Fingal's Community Development Office, Fingal Environment, Climate Action and Active Travel Department and the Fingal Community Facilities Network.

4.5 Policies and Objectives

4.5.1 Community/Social Infrastructure

Community or social infrastructure within a County plays a hugely significant role in facilitating spaces where citizens can come together to meet, enjoy group activities, find social support and public information, exercise and enjoy nature amongst other uses. Such facilities promote activity across all ages and promote inclusion, bringing together diverse groups of people from within the community. As the County grows, Fingal County Council continues to provide a range of facilities which support the provision of valuable community

infrastructure in existing and new communities. While the delivery of community and social infrastructure is the responsibility of a number of stakeholders, the Council will use its financial resources and/or external funding to deliver new facilities while also maximising the potential of existing quality facilities, e.g Donabate/Portrane Community and Leisure Centre and Mulhuddart Community Centre. This avoids duplication and prevents the creation of smaller spaces, which may not always result in long term viability nor lasting benefit for the wider community. External funding mechanisms include the Urban Regeneration Development Fund (URDF) and the Rural Regeneration Development Fund (RRDF). In addition, the Council will work with public and private stakeholders to provide facilities throughout the County.

As Fingal continues to grow in line with projected population, it is proposed over the lifetime of this Plan to undertake an audit of community infrastructure which will provide direction in terms of future investment in this area. Given that community facilities are provided by a range of departments in Fingal, a collaborative approach is considered the best practice approach.

As part of the Development Management process, a developer may be required to provide space for a new community facility or contribute towards the provision or improvement of new or existing facilities and infrastructure by way of a development contribution under Section 48 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). This legislation permits the Council to include conditions requiring the payment of a contribution in respect of public infrastructure and facilities benefiting development in the area of the Planning Authority. The Development Contribution Scheme 2021–2025 includes a range of applicable community and open space infrastructure which may be provided in this manner. These include new and extended community centres and libraries, new children's play facilities, recreational facilities and open space provision and upgrade. A social infrastructure audit will be required for large scale residential developments in the planning application process.

Land-use management plans also play important roles in achieving community and recreational facilities as part of the plan-making process. Such plans may set specific objectives or direct that community infrastructure is provided as part of development proposals within a plan area, setting clear design principles and specifying standards to be achieved. Provision of social/community facilities should always incorporate a universal design approach, taking account of location, layout and design to ensure maximum accessibility and connectivity to the surrounding area.

4.5.1.1 Community Centres

In Fingal, there is a strong network of community centres in both established and growing communities which offer a wide range of facilities and services. They play a vital role in bringing people together and reducing isolation, encouraging people to take part in both educational and recreational activities. Through social interaction, these centres help build inclusive communities. Fingal's Community Development Office provides support to community centres to deliver initiatives that specifically meet community need. The Fingal Community and Sports hub in Mountview, Tyrrelstown and Flemington through the work of a designated community officer, is supporting community group development and increasing community service delivery in these community centres.

These facilities offer a range of social and recreational opportunities for the local community. Fingal County Council currently owns and operates 15 no. community centres and has shared arrangements through the Department of Education for a further 6 no. centres as well as multiple other buildings throughout the County. In addition, there are numerous centres around the County which are privately owned and managed by individual communities. Multi-purpose community facilities proposed for Lanesborough/Meakestown and Baldoyle are currently at design/planning stage and the Council is actively engaging with the community in Howth to identify suitable options for community facilities. The need for additional and extended community facilities within the County is kept under active review and the Council will support the provision of such facilities where there is an identified need in line with population projections. In addition, the Council will support the extension and refurbishment of existing centres.

Fingal County Council is committed to ensuring the provision of high-quality state of the art facilities. A Community Facilities Management Support Unit provides support to 33 no. community facilities across Fingal through the provision of a range of funding, technical and mentoring supports. The Council also engages a facility operator to support the day-to-day management of a further 15 no. community facilities. This ensures that such resources are provided to a very high and safe standard for community enjoyment.

A Community Facilities Network has also been established which supports a wide range of collaborations and training options promoting greater synergies. Such projects include a “remobilisation working group” which was established during Covid-19 to provide support and assistance to community centres post lockdown.

4.5.1.2 Recreation and Sports Facilities in Fingal

It is imperative that as our communities grow, the expanding recreational and amenity needs of the community are also met. The provision of open spaces, recreational facilities and areas which encourage physical activity in general are key factors in contributing to improved physical and mental health. The Council supports national and regional objectives to ensure an active population thereby significantly enhancing public health and RPO 9.15 of the RSES which requires that “Local Authorities shall support the vision and objectives of the National Sports Policy, including working with local sports partnerships, clubs, communities and partnerships within and beyond sport, to increase sport and physical activity participation levels locally”. The Council directly provides the majority of facilities used for sports and outdoor recreation in Fingal. Currently almost 200 no. outdoor sports pitches are provided by the Council for use by a range of sporting codes. These are generally applied for and allocated on an annual basis to local clubs in response to their demand for facilities. The maintenance of sports grounds is of critical importance to clubs in Fingal, some of which rely almost exclusively on the Council for their facilities. Over 400 teams from more than sixty sports clubs use these outdoor facilities.

The Council supports the *National Physical Activity Plan – Get Ireland Active: Strategic Plan 2017–2020* and its target to increase the proportion of the population across each life stage undertaking regular physical activity by 1% per annum across the lifetime of Healthy Ireland². *The Fingal Sports Office Vision Statement 2019–2021* is based on a vision to build stronger, healthier and more sustainable sporting communities across Fingal. This is an interim policy statement to allow the Council to carry out certain functions and procedures as outlined in the *National Sports Policy 2018 – 2027*. These procedures include a facility audit, which will help inform the basis of “Local Sports Plans” as outlined in the National policy document.

2 Government-led initiative which aims to create an Irish society where everyone can enjoy good physical and mental health, and where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society.

The *National Sports Policy 2018–2027* recognises the importance of developing a comprehensive, up-to-date database of facilities as the basis for a long-term planned approach to facility management, investment and addressing future needs. In line with this, a *Sports and Recreation Facilities Audit* was published in February 2021 for the local electoral areas of Balbriggan, Swords, Rush-Lusk. The aim of the audit was to develop a comprehensive overview of the existing provision of recreation, leisure and sports facilities within the study area. One of the key objectives was to identify a gap and needs analysis, focusing on what is required in the study area in order to develop and maintain facilities. A similar audit will be carried out for the remainder of the County during the lifetime of this Plan.

Active Recreational Hubs

Fingal County Council is pioneering the provision of Active Recreational Hubs strategically located in parks and open spaces around the County. This programme is in line with Council's *"Keeping It Green – Open Space Strategy"* adopted in 2015. Recreational Hubs include high specification, well-serviced sports facilities designed for high-intensity use, catering for a range of sporting codes and located so that they facilitate ease of access with good connectivity via active travel infrastructure. Proximity to primary and post-primary schools is also a factor in determining the optimum location for these facilities. Where hubs are located close to schools, this increases the daytime use of the facilities and ideally associated infrastructure adding greatly to the financial sustainability of the facilities. The intensification of use in these hubs is achieved by the inclusion of professionally designed and constructed grass pitches, all-weather sports pitches and athletics facilities which are floodlit and available for evening use when demand is high. The Recreational Hub model is predicated on the Council liaising with local clubs with a view to these clubs becoming major stakeholders in the facilities and forming Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) to manage the facilities via a Management Agreement between the clubs and the Council. The Capital investment provided by the Council by way of open space levies and grant funding is protected by a "not for profit" sustainable financial model. Currently in Fingal, four of these facilities have received planning approval and several more are at various stages in the planning process including Porterstown Park and Ballymastone Recreational Hubs.

The state-of-the-art National Sports Campus (NSC) is located at Abbottstown and is home to world-class indoor and outdoor facilities which host local, national, and international events and which are used for team and individual training. The Campus also provides valuable amenities for the local community with facility rentals, children's camps, sports academies, team-building events, corporate conferences and more. Fingal County Council recognises the importance and potential of the NSC and to support the growth of the campus, it has been given its own unique zoning (NSC). This will allow for the continued expansion of the campus in a sustainable manner, which will give greater scope for the provision of associated and ancillary facilities at this location.



4.5.1.3 Facilities for Older People

The RSES recognises that many of the factors which contribute to a good quality of life for older people are community-based and that all sectors have a role to play in creating an age-friendly society. High quality healthcare, community facilities and accessible transport networks are important factors for older people and it is imperative that the Council plays a role in achieving age-friendly communities in the County.

It is vital for Fingal County Council to plan to meet changing needs as the population age profile of the County changes and RPO 9.23 of the RSES requires that the Council “Facilitate the development of primary health care centres, hospitals, clinics, and facilities to cater for the specific needs of an ageing population in appropriate urban areas in accordance with RSES settlement strategy and core strategies of development plans”.

Fingal County Council signed the Dublin Declaration on Age Friendly Cities and Communities, a World Health Organisation Initiative in 2011 and proceeded to develop the *Fingal Age Friendly Strategy 2012–2017* and update in 2018–2023. From this came Fingal Age Friendly Facilities, which are places where older people may enjoy the best possible local facilities as they grow older. Fingal County Council is committed to supporting older people to live healthily and independently and to be active participants within their own communities.

Policy CIOSP1 – Community and Social Infrastructure

To identify vacant commercial units and encourage their transition to potential community infrastructure.

Objective CIOSO1 – Community Facilities and Social Infrastructure Audit

Support the preparation of a Fingal cross-departmental community facilities and social infrastructure audit of the County.

Objective CIOSO2 – Community Centres

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 on walking, cycling and public transport use, while providing appropriate car parking facilities to meet anticipated demand of non-local visitors to the centre.

Objective CIOSO3 – Community Infrastructure Guidelines

Comply with the aims, objectives and principles in relation to community infrastructure as outlined in the *“Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas”* and the accompanying *“Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide”* and any amendment thereof.

Objective CIOSO4 – Vacant Commercial Units

To identify vacant commercial units and encourage their transition to potential community infrastructure.

Policy CIOPS2 – Community and Social Infrastructure Audits

Promote the preparation of community and social infrastructure audits for large-scale developments which will inform policy on infrastructure provision within Fingal.

Objective CIOSO5 – Residential Developments and Community Facilities

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.

Policy CIOSP3 – Timely provision of community facilities

Ensure the timely provision in conjunction with housing development of community services, resources and infrastructure, including schools, community, religious, and health facilities, required for the creation of sustainable communities.

Objective CIOSO6

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 CIOSO7

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.

Policy CIOSP4 – Social inclusion

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

Policy CIOSP5 – Community Engagement

Support community engagement initiatives and the objectives of the Fingal Corporate Plan 2019–2024.

Policy CIOSP6 – Facilities for children, teens and young adults.

Provide appropriate recreational, community, social and educational facilities for children, teens and young adults.

Objective CIOSO8 – Flexibility in Design

Ensure community facilities are flexible in their design and promote optimum usage, for users of all age and abilities.

Policy CIOSP7 – Variety of Community Facilities

Ensure the timely provision of community services, recreational facilities (including playgrounds) and resources, including schools, community, religious, burial and health facilities, required for the creation of sustainable communities.

Objective CIOSO9 – Clustering Community Facilities

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

Policy CIOSP8 – Sports Facilities

Ensure that all communities in the County are facilitated with a variety of sporting facilities that are fit for purpose, accessible and adaptable.

Objective CIOSO10 – Sports and Recreation Facilities Audit

Support the preparation of further sports and recreation facilities audit for the County, in accordance with the National Sports Policy (2018–2027).

Objective CIOSO11 – Active Recreational Hubs and Multi-Use Games Areas

Promote the development of high-quality and multi-functional recreational facilities throughout Fingal, including Active Recreational Hubs and Multi-Use Games Areas to meet existing and future community needs, in accordance with the National Sports Policy (2018–2027).

Objective CIOSO12 – Fingal Sports Office Vision Statement 2019–2021

Support the strategic goals of the *Fingal Sports Office Vision Statement 2019–2021*, or any superseding sports strategy for the County.

Objective CIOSO13 – Healthy Ireland and the National Physical Activity Plan

Promote public health policy including Healthy Ireland and the National Physical Activity Plan in line with NPO 26 of the NPF and RPO 9.16 of the RSES.

Objective CIOSO14 – National Sports Campus Zoning (NSC)

Facilitate the provision of sporting facilities and associated infrastructure in accordance with the National Sports Campus zoning (NSC), incorporating appropriate office, administration, training, accommodation and other associated and ancillary development.

4.5.1.4 Education – Primary and Post-Primary

Fingal County Council is the youngest Local Authority in the State (at 33.8 years) which is 3.7 years lower than the State, 2.2 years lower than the region and 2.5 years lower than Dublin average. As such, the demand for school places and new schools is high in the County. School facilities play a key role in their respective communities and can be a determining factor as to why people chose to live in a certain area. Fingal is home to a wide range of both primary and post-primary schools. Many schools provide a broader function in the communities they serve and often provide meeting rooms and facilities for evening classes, sports clubs and other activities. The facilitation of school premises outside of school hours for community use is supported and encouraged.

The Code of Practice issued by the Department of Environment, Heritage and local Government in 2008 entitled *“The Provision of Schools and the Planning System”* 2008, has three core objectives for the effective integration of the school and the planning system. These include the following:

- That schools provision should be an integral part of the evolution of compact sustainable urban development and the development of sustainable communities.
- The provision of any new schools (both primary and post-primary) should be driven by and emerge from an integrated approach between the planning functions of Planning Authorities and the Department of Education and Science; and
- Local Authorities, as Planning Authorities, will support and assist the Department in ensuring the timely provision of school sites.

Fingal County Council continues to work collaboratively with the Department of Education in relation to the identification of schools and associated facilities. Under the Memorandum of Agreement, Fingal County Council makes land in its ownership available at a reduced cost to the Department of Education. In return the Department of Education, in co-operation with Fingal County Council, make a greater investment in enhanced sports and community and recreational facilities for schools being provided throughout the County. Based on extensive experience in the management and operation of community facilities, Fingal County Council's Architects and Community Departments have developed a design brief which may be duplicated across various sites ensuring facilities can meet the needs of the community.

Enhanced facilities are designed to meet varied community needs as identified by the Community Culture and Sports Division of Fingal County Council. The range of facilities includes amenities such as full-size sports hall, dressing rooms, storage areas, community meeting rooms, childcare spaces, all weather pitches and playgrounds. (This may vary from site to site). These additional facilities exceed the Department's standard specification for schools and are also made available to the local community outside of school hours. Facilities constructed under the Memorandum of Agreement are leased by the Department of Education to Fingal County Council who in turn issue a management licence to a local Board of Management. This ensures that community facilities are operated to meet community and educational needs in tandem.

Table 4.1: New Primary and Post-Primary Schools opened in Fingal since 2016

School Name	Location	School Type	Opening year
Rivervalley Community National School	Swords	Primary	2019
Broadmeadow Community National School	Swords	Primary	2020
Gealscoil na Mara	Donabate	Primary	2020
Danu Community Special School	Hansfield, Dublin 15	Primary	2019
Bremore Educate Together Secondary School	Balbriggan	Post-Primary	2016
Edmund Rice College	Blanchardstown	Post-Primary	2017
Malahide & Portmarnock ETSS	Kinsealy	Post-Primary	2018
Swords Community College	Swords	Post-Primary	2018
Eriu Community College	Porterstown, D15	Post-Primary	2020

While the provision of new schools is the responsibility of the Department of Education, Fingal County Council has and will continue to work collaboratively with the Department and with the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science in relation to the identification of suitable sites for the delivery of new and expanded educational facilities in Fingal. Fingal County Council will engage with all relevant stakeholders and identify sites that could be used to provide much needed schools as identified in the Kilmartin Plan for the people of Tyrrelstown, Hollystown and Hollywoodrath that are in real need for a primary and secondary school.

Policy CIOSP9 - Education and Health

Continue to work collaboratively with Educational and Health care providers to ensure the timely provision of educational facilities, health care and community resources throughout Fingal. The Plan will support the provision of education and healthcare facilities in line with national and regional policy objectives.

Objective CIOSO15

Encourage the continued use and possible intensification of existing educational infrastructure where appropriate. Facilitate the development of new schools, the re-development of existing schools and extensions planned as part of the Government's School Building Programme.

Objective CIOSO16

Identify sites for primary and secondary schools in consultation with the Department of Education based on future population growth projections and in accordance with the Core Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy.

Objective CIOSO17

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.

Objective CIOSO18

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 CIOSO19

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

Objective CIOSO20

Require new schools to be designed in accordance with "School Streets" principles incorporating traffic free, clean air zones around schools either permanently or on a time controlled basis coinciding with school opening and closing times wherever possible.

4.5.1.5 Higher and Further Education

Fingal is home to one third level institution, Technological University Dublin located in Blanchardstown while Connolly Hospital, a major teaching hospital is also located within the County. Educational attainment is an important factor when planning for the future and 39.6% of the population in Fingal have a third level education, which is higher than the national average at 33.4%. The importance of a well-educated population is recognised and fully supported by Fingal County Council.

Other third level institutions within close proximity to Fingal and accessible to Fingal's residents include Dublin City University (DCU), Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) and Trinity College Dublin (TCD). In addition, there are numerous facilities in the County offering higher and further educational opportunities, including adult and Youthreach classes and programmes. Fingal County Council is an active member of the Fingal Community Education Network, which is an inter-agency group providing support and coordination for specific adult education courses in areas across Fingal.

Objective CIOSO21 – Higher Education

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

Objective CIOSO22

Promote and facilitate the development of existing and new further education centres where practicable and in proximity to public transport, particularly in areas of high socio-economic disadvantage.

Objective CIOSO23

Promote and facilitate the development of existing and new further education centres where practicable and in proximity to public transport, particularly in areas of high socio-economic disadvantage.

4.5.1.6 Healthcare

The Health Service Executive (HSE) is the primary body responsible for the provision of health care facilities in the County. There are currently three public hospitals within the Fingal area including, Connolly Hospital in Blanchardstown, and the more specialised facilities of the National Orthopaedic Hospital at Cappagh and the new National Forensic Mental Health Service (NFMHS) which is a new state-of-the-art facility, located at St. Ita's in Portrane. There are 14 no. health centres in Fingal, with a centre located in each of the urban population centres, including 3 no. in the Blanchardstown area.

The HSE's Sláintecare established in 2018, seeks to achieve a universal single-tier health and social care system where everyone has equal access to services based on need, and not ability to pay, with a focus on delivering the majority of services in the community. Fingal County Council will continue to support the provision of public and private healthcare facilities throughout the County on suitably zoned lands and will promote the location of same close to new and existing communities where services can be easily accessed.

Objective CIOSO24 – Healthcare Facilities

Support and facilitate the development of health centres, hospitals, clinics and primary care centres where new communities are proposed and in towns, villages and local centres, with good accessibility for all.

Objective CIOSO25

Encourage and facilitate the delivery of a primary care centre for Swords.

4.5.1.7 Childcare and Early Learning

The provision of high-quality accessible childcare and early learning facilities in existing and new communities is an important factor for economic and social wellbeing. Fingal County Childcare Committee (FCCC) currently has 320 no. registered childcare services in the Fingal area. The Council will seek to facilitate the provision of childcare facilities in appropriate locations throughout the County. In line with the DEHLG *Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2001*, the Council will encourage the provision of such facilities in new and existing residential developments, within employment zones, town and neighbourhood centres, within educational buildings and close to public transport nodes. The Council will also continue to engage with FCCC regarding proposals for new facilities. The detailed standards required for such facilities are contained in the Chapter 14 Development Management Standards of the Plan.

Policy CIOSP10 – Childcare Facilities

Support the provision of appropriate childcare facilities.

Objective CIOSO26

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. Encourage the co-location of childcare facilities and community facilities where appropriate, such as community centres and schools, with an emphasis on community and not for profit child care facilities where appropriate.

Objective CIOSO27

Require the provision of appropriate childcare facilities as an essential part of new residential and mixed-use developments in accordance with the provisions of the *Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2001* or any superseding Guidelines, or as required by the Planning Authority. Such facilities should be provided in a timely manner and be an integral part of the development proposal.

Objective CIOSO28

Promote the establishment in community-based, non-profit, childcare in future Fingal community facilities.

4.5.1.8 Libraries

Since the early 1990s, Fingal Libraries have been a progressive and innovative service, building and developing new branch libraries, renovating and enhancing existing buildings and adopting new technologies and work practices. Libraries form a fundamental part of the community and cultural infrastructure within the County. The Council currently operates 10 no. libraries and key developments in recent years include a branch library co-located with a community and leisure centre at Donabate, the introduction of self-service using RFID (radio-frequency identification) technology, 3 no. new mobile library vans, new library management and book distribution systems and the increased use of digital resources and eServices.

The *Fingal Libraries Development Plan* provides a road map for the period 2018–2023, setting out the vision for the future of Fingal Libraries as a dynamic and inclusive space supporting culture, recreation, literacy, education and economic development in the County.

The aim is to continue to provide accessible, democratic, inclusive and dynamic spaces in which people can engage, enjoy, create and learn. The key challenges of having a young, diverse and growing population present opportunities to respond with innovative uses of space and technology, with relevant print and digital collections and with imaginative cultural and educational programmes. Fingal County Council will continue to expand and develop this service subject to need and available resources.

Policy CIOSP11 – Libraries

Continue to support the expansion and growth of libraries as key community and cultural assets within the County.

Objective CIOSO29

Support the development of the County's library services and the implementation of key objectives, as set out in the *Fingal Libraries Development Plan 2018–2023* or any superseding document.



4.5.1.9 Places of Worship/Multi-Faith Facilities

In line with the growing population is an increase in the number of faith communities and demand for additional places of worship throughout the County. Fingal County Council will continue to facilitate the development of new places of worship, ideally proximate to residential communities, where it is shown that these developments do not give rise to noise or traffic related issues which may adversely affect the amenity of adjacent residents. Places of worship will be encouraged to utilise existing shared community facilities where appropriate.

Objective CIOSO30 – Places of Worship

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 CIOSO31

Encourage and facilitate the development of places of worship in appropriate locations in urban centres or within existing community facilities and proximate to residential communities.

4.5.1.10 Burial Facilities

Fingal County Council acknowledges that many existing burial grounds within the County have reached or are nearing full capacity, particularly older or historic graveyards. Demand has grown in recent years for graveyards to include Columbarium walls. The future burial requirements of the County including Columbarium walls will be accommodated within Regional graveyards.

Policy CIOSP12 – Burial Grounds

Continue to support and facilitate the provision of appropriate burial facilities across Fingal.

Objective CIOSO32

Facilitate the development of extended and additional burial grounds, including green graveyards/natural burial grounds in Fingal, bearing in mind the needs of multi-faith and non-religious communities, subject to traffic, noise and environmental considerations.

Objective CIOSO33

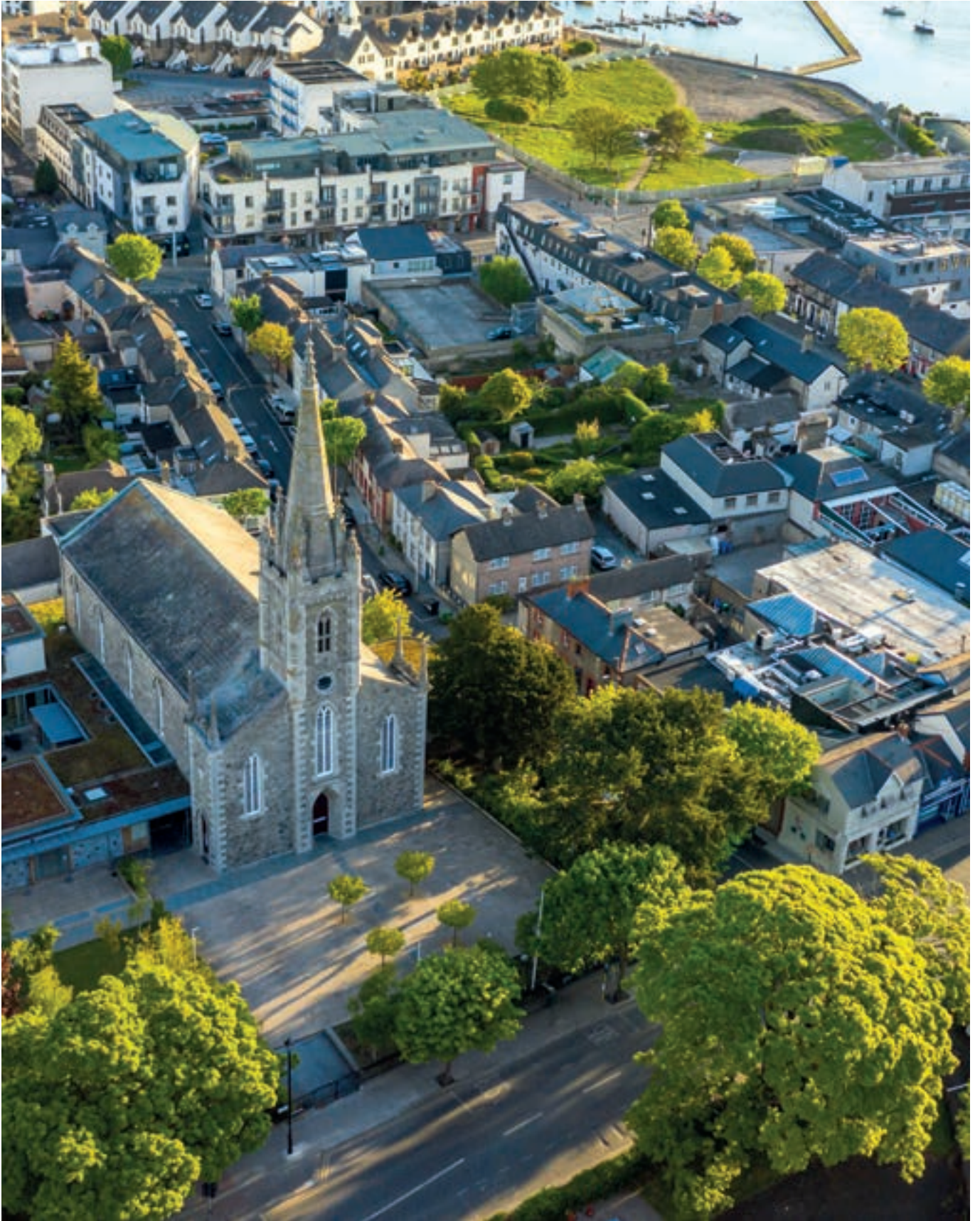
Facilitate the future burial requirements of the County including the provision of Columbarium walls where possible, within existing and regional graveyards.

4.5.1.11 Fire Stations

Fingal County 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 services.

Objective CIOSO34 – Fire Stations

Continue to support the provision of a modern and efficient fire service as required and in conjunction with Dublin City Council.



4.5.2 Open Space

Fingal's open spaces, including its public parks, its demesne landscapes, coastal amenities, playgrounds and other outdoor facilities are prized resources within the County and Fingal County Council promotes an inclusive approach to access and accessibility. The variety of open space comprises a major component of the Green Infrastructure network of the County. In recent times and with the arrival of Covid-19 restrictions, the importance of our outdoor parks and open spaces for physical exercise and for the enjoyment of nature has increased exponentially. The availability of good quality, highly accessible public spaces in close proximity to our homes is a vital local resource and an important element in the establishment of successful neighbourhoods and in fostering a sense of place. Fingal has a well-defined network of open spaces and recreational facilities that are accessible to significant numbers of the County's population. The Council has approximately 2,000 hectares (5,000 acres) of public open space, sixty per cent of which has been generated through the planning process. The quantitative standard used through the planning process requires that 25 hectares is provided per 10,000 of population.

Types of open spaces in the County range from small pocket parks to large Regional parks such as the historic demesnes of Malahide, Newbridge and Ardgillan. Fingal County Council's *"Keeping It Green, An Open Space Strategy for Fingal"* 2015 provides the strategy for the provision and management of the County's public open spaces. The strategy seeks to improve open space provision through better and more sustainable approaches to its management and outlines qualitative standards for the provision of existing and future open spaces. The focus of the strategy is on publicly owned and/or maintained land, the primary use of which is for outdoor recreation and amenity in Fingal. This Plan will continue to support the objectives and actions of the strategy, and this is discussed further in Chapter 9 Green Infrastructure and Natural Heritage.

The five basic principles regarding open space provision in the County will continue to apply for this Plan and appropriate policies and objectives will guide the provision of a hierarchy of high quality, attractive and secure public and private open spaces, ranging from Regional parks and major local parks to smaller pocket parks, private gardens and balconies, as well as intensive recreational, amenity and community facilities such as Active Recreational Hubs and Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs). Private amenity space for new residential developments is addressed in Chapter 3 Sustainable Placemaking and Quality Homes and Chapter 9 Green Infrastructure and Natural Heritage. Standards in relation to open space provision are included in the Chapter 14 Development Management Standards.

To achieve high quality open space, Fingal County Council has five basic principles of open space provision; Hierarchy, Accessibility, Quantity, Quality and Private Open Space.

4.5.2.1 Hierarchy

The public open space hierarchy and accessibility standards are detailed in Table 4.2 below. 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.

Table 4.2: Public Open Space and Play Space Hierarchy and Accessibility Standards

Type of Public Open Space	Size of Park / Open Space	Distance from homes	Level of Play provision	Age group catered for	Description of Play Space
Pocket Parks (Class 2 as per Development Contribution Scheme) Facilities for smaller children, but not necessarily formal play facilities. Have an important visual and social function also. Pocket parks must not be to the side or back of houses and must be adequately overlooked.	Between 500 sq.m. – 0.2 hectares	Within 100–200 metres walking distance of homes	LAP (Local Area for Play) Minimum 10m x 10m to approximately 20% of public open space depending on calculated provision	Intended primarily for children up to the age of 6, though it will be used by older children at different times of the day or evening	Accessible and inclusive landscaped areas for play Imaginatively designed and contoured, using as far as possible natural materials such as logs or boulders with associated planting which create an attractive setting for play.
Small Parks (Class 2 as per Development Contribution Scheme) Depending on their size, these will accommodate playground facilities, kick about areas, and passive recreation.	Between 0.2 – 2 hectares	Within 500–1000 metres walking distance of homes	LEAP (Local Equipped Area for Play) Minimum activity zone of 200 square metres	Intended, in the context of play, for use by children up to the age of 12.	Accessible and inclusive landscaped areas for play Imaginatively designed and contoured, using as far as possible natural materials such as logs or boulders in combination with traditional play equipment and associated planting. Where natural landscape such as woodland is in proximity to the play space, this should be incorporated and play opportunities dispersed throughout the available space as appropriate.
Local Parks (Class 1 as per Development Contribution Scheme) Accommodate playground facilities and a number of playing fields. Passive recreational and biodiversity areas will also be accommodated in these parks.	Between 2 hectares – 20 hectares	Within 500–1000 metres walking distance of homes	LEAP (Local Equipped Area for Play) Minimum activity zone of 400 square metres	Intended, in the context of play, for use by young and older children.	Accessible and inclusive landscaped areas for play Imaginatively designed and contoured, using as far as possible natural materials such as logs or boulders in combination with traditional play equipment and associated planting. Where natural landscape such as woodland is in proximity to the play space this should be incorporated and play opportunities dispersed throughout the available space as appropriate. Provision for older children up to 17 years old such as hangout zones with bespoke seating and wi-fi connectivity in combination with such features as a MUGA or skating elements. The play space should reflect local heritage or folklore by linking design to local theme.

<p>Urban Neighbourhood Parks (Class 1. As per Development Contribution Scheme) A wide variety of facilities and uses can be provided here due to their size. Biodiversity areas will also be accommodated in these parks.</p>	<p>Between 20 hectares – 50 hectares</p>	<p>Within 1000–1500 metres walking distance of homes</p>	<p>NEAP (Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play) Minimum activity zone of 1,000 sq. metres comprising an area for play equipment and structures and a hard-surfaced area of at least 465 sq. metres (the minimum needed to play 5 aside football)</p>	<p>Intended for use by accompanied young children and older children of relative independence, who have the freedom to range further from home.</p>	<p>Accessible and inclusive landscaped areas for play imaginatively designed and contoured, using as far as possible natural materials such as logs or boulders in combination with traditional play equipment with associated planting. Where natural landscape such as woodland is in proximity to the play space this should be incorporated and play opportunities dispersed throughout the available space. Provision for older children up to 17 years old such as hangout zones with bespoke seating and wi-fi connectivity. The larger space available in such provision should facilitate extended provision of MUGA and other informal, non-structured activity such as a skate park, BMX track or Callisthenics equipment. The play space should reflect local heritage, or folklore by linking design to a local theme.</p>
<p>Regional Parks (Class 1 as per Development Contribution Scheme) Provide for a large range of uses. Formal and informal play areas, passive recreation areas, biodiversity areas and often a distinct attraction will be available on site.</p>	<p>Over 50 hectares</p>	<p>Within 15 km</p>	<p>“Destination” Playground Popular facilities include meeting areas and youth shelters within local open space, floodlit multi-games areas, skateboard parks and BMX track</p>	<p>Intended as a destination where all ages will find a broad range of amenities to enjoy both as family units and independently.</p>	<p>Within regional parks, all ages of the community can be catered for with the provision of the features of LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs on a larger scale. The play spaces should reflect local heritage. The park landscape should also be evaluated for its potential to offer natural play and adventurous opportunities.</p>

***Areas not counted in the Open Space calculation include:**

- Environmental Open Space, i.e. incidental or narrow pieces of open space used for the preservation of trees/ hedgerows and or as a visual relief and screen planting e.g. along roads.
- Green corridors
- Areas of open space under high voltage electricity lines and wayleave areas.
- Areas of open space where the presence of archaeology prohibits the development of the required play provision for a development in accordance with Development Plan standards.

4.5.2.2 Accessibility

Public open space and recreational facilities should be accessible by sustainable means of transport namely walking, cycling and public transport, depending on the catchment of the facility in question. The provision for cycling in parks is permitted under Fingal's current Parks and Open Spaces Bye-laws. Infrastructure for Electric Vehicle (EV) charging is provided for in all new car parks developed in parks and open spaces. Retrospective EV charging provision in existing car parks is being addressed by the Council's Operations Department.

4.5.2.3 Quantity

It is important that a wide variety of public open space is provided throughout Fingal. 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 is not less than 10% of a development site area. This provision recognises the contribution residential open space makes to multi-functional urban Green Infrastructure and nature-based solutions such as Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDS), biodiversity and active travel. The development site area cannot include lands zoned RU, GB, OS or HA.

Consideration may be given by the Council to the inclusion of civic spaces within overall open space quantum calculations, but only on a case-by-case basis and only in instances where the space proposed is of a size and layout suitable to cater for civic events, is of an exceptionally high standard of finish, including the planting of large street trees and associated landscaping and does not fulfil ancillary functions associated with commercial or other land uses.

Table 4.3: Recommended quantitative standards (Sustainable Residential Developments in Urban Areas, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009))

Land use	Minimum public open space standards
Overall standard	2.5 hectares per 1000 population
New residential development on greenfield sites/LAP lands	15% of site area
New residential development on infill/brownfield sites	10% of site area

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 may include indoor or outdoor all-weather recreational facilities. Intensive recreational/amenity facilities are defined as any resource, 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.

4.5.2.4 Quality

High quality open space and recreational facilities will ensure that these spaces are frequently used and enjoyed by residents. Different types of open space and recreational facilities meet different needs and therefore have different functions. The larger open spaces and recreational facilities should ideally combine passive and active recreational uses.

Careful consideration should go into the design of public open spaces, and they should be provided to a high specification. Emphasis must be placed on quality, 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 a manner to reduce the occurrence of anti-social behaviour.

4.5.2.5 Private Open Space

All residential units must be provided with appropriate levels of private open space for the amenity of residents. These standards are detailed in Chapter 14 Development Management Standards.

4.5.2.6 Playgrounds and play facilities

Within the Fingal area, play facilities are located in Regional, Local and Neighbourhood Parks and within residential open space. Providing excellent play facilities for all the children of Fingal and visitors to the County, is a priority. Fingal County Council currently manages a network of play spaces on Council managed land ranging from playgrounds of various sizes in local and regional parks, to MUGA's and skate parks. The Council has approved Fingal's first Play Policy, *Space for Play – A Play Policy for Fingal*, which aims to provide a framework for the provision of safe, accessible, inclusive, natural and engaging play spaces for all children and adolescents up to the age of seventeen. The Play Policy provides the basis on which the current and future play provision throughout the County will be developed to the highest quality in line with international best practice.

In residential and mixed-use developments, it will be a requirement of the Council to provide play facilities as part of the landscape plan for the site. The requirements for same are detailed in the Table 4.2 and Chapter 14 Development Management Standards.

Table 4.4: Public Sports and Playing Facilities in Fingal

Facilities	Quantity
Grass Pitches	168
Playgrounds and play trails	49
Changing rooms	46
Tennis Courts	46

Outdoor Exercise gyms and callisthenic areas	38
Multi Use Games Areas (MUGA's)	9
Mini pitches	5
Cricket pitches	6
Skateparks	4
Golf courses (full size)	2
Golf course (par 3)	2
Trim trails	2
Bowling greens	2
BMX track	1
Driving range	1
Traditional farm	1

4.2.5.7 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. *The Forest of Fingal – A Tree Strategy for Fingal* sets out the Council's policy for street tree planting, management and maintenance. In addition to contributing to visual amenity and a sense of place, trees are increasingly recognised as a significant component of Green Infrastructure. Trees provide nature-based solutions to the challenges of urbanisation including improved air quality (levels of particulate pollution on tree-lined streets can be up to 60% lower than those without trees) and surface water management (100 mature trees can capture as much as 1,137,500 litres of rainwater each year). Trees also have a role in mitigating climate change and in 155ecarbonizing the urban environment (single mature tree absorbs carbon at a rate of 21.6kg per year). The vision of the Tree Strategy is “To protect and enhance Fingal's trees to maximise both the benefits they offer and the character they bring to the County to ensure a greener, healthier Fingal for now and future generations”. The strategy sets out a series of policies, objectives and actions aimed at achieving this vision.

4.5.2.8 Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS)

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 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. There is a requirement to ensure that the design of SuDS enhances the quality of open spaces.

SuDS shall be incorporated into all parts of a development (open spaces, roads, footpaths, private areas) as per the "FCC SuDS Guidance Document – Green/ Blue Infrastructure for Development", as amended (Appendix 11 refers), and shall ensure:

- That the design of SuDS enhances the quality of open spaces and when included as part of any open space provision, it must contribute in a significant and positive way to the design and quality of the open space.
- Open space areas shall not be dominated by SuDS features.
- Underground tanked systems, whether concrete or plastic, are the least favoured means for surface water management and shall only be used when green solutions have proven not feasible.

4.5.2.9 Allotments, Community Gardens and Community Initiatives

Allotments and community gardens represent an important element of Green Infrastructure in Fingal. Fingal County Council manages approximately 900 no. allotments at four sites within the County. Three of the sites are located in the North County at Turvey in Donabate, Skerries and Balbriggan. The fourth site is located at Powerstown, close to Mulhuddart in the Dublin 15 area. The Council works closely with the Allotment Committees to deliver improvements to all sites, which results in increased benefits and enjoyment experienced by all plot holders. A number of successful Community Gardens have been sponsored and supported by the Council in parks and open spaces around the County. Community Gardens have been the recipients of special Green Flag Community Awards in recognition of the creativity and innovation demonstrated by these groups, e.g. Rock Garden, Rathbeale Road, Swords.

The importance of allotments, community gardens and re-wilding initiatives are recognised throughout the County and will continue to be supported in the Plan. The Council is supporting local community groups such as Tidy Towns and Men's Sheds to develop Local Biodiversity Action Plans with specific and tailor-made initiative and projects they can implement in line with best practice.

Policy CIOSP13 – Open Space/Parks

Continue the development of a hierarchy of multifunctional active and passive recreational open spaces and facilities to serve all age cohorts.

Policy CIOSP14 – Sports, recreation and play amenities

Support sports, recreational and play amenities in the County for all ages and abilities; encourage sporting and recreational organisations to achieve their aims and goals and support platforms for new and alternative sports to develop.

Objective CIOSO35 – Variety of Open Space

Provide a wide variety of resiliently designed, sustainably managed and accessible public open spaces, including allotments, community gardens, 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.

Objective CIOSO36 – Public Open Space Provision

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 CIOSO37 – Clustering of Active Recreational Open Space Facilities

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

Objective CIOSO38 – Intensive Recreational/Amenity Facilities

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 CIOSO39 – Accessible and Safe Open Space

Ensure public open space is accessible and safety is prioritised by incorporating passive surveillance.

Objective CIOSO40 – Accessible Toilet & Changing Places Facilities

Support the provision of fully accessible toilet facilities for all ages and abilities including changing places facilities in Regional Parks.

Objective CIOSO41

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.

Objective CIOSO42 – Playgrounds

Facilitate the provision of appropriately scaled children's playground facilities within new and existing residential development in line with the Council's Play Policy.

Objective CIOSO43 – Feasibility studies

Carry out appropriate feasibility studies and ensure the locating of sites to increase the alternative play and recreational facilities, within the county's townlands by 25%, throughout the lifetime of this plan.

Objective CIOSO44 – Multi-Functional Buildings

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

Objective CIOSO45 – Intensive Recreational/Amenity Facilities

Allow recreational/amenity facilities (indoor or outdoor) of a more intensive nature to 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 4.2.

Objective CIOSO46

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

Objective CIOSO47 – Smaller Developments and Open Space

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.

Objective CIOSO48

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 CIOSO49 – Permeability

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

Objective CIOSO50 – Trees

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

Objective CIOSO51 – Open space and privacy

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.

Objective CIOSO52 – Pets and Wildlife

Ensure that all animals including pets and wildlife are adequately catered for and protected in parks and open spaces.

Policy CIOSP15 – Open seawater facilities and open water pools

Promote, develop and support the provision and upgrade of “Open Seawater” facilities (to include consideration of changing and toilet facilities), including fully accessible open water public pools to the highest specifications and standards at suitable locations across the Fingal region.

Policy CIOSP16 – Dunsink Planetarium

To promote the concept of a “planetarium” on the lands of Dunsink adjacent to the Observatory.