

Planning Department,
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council,
County Hall,
Marine Road,
Dun Laoghaire,
Co. Dublin

13th December 2018

Re. Dundrum LAP Issues Paper Submission

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of The Roebuck Residents' Association I wish to make a submission regarding the Dundrum Local Area Plan Issues Paper. Our area bounds the proposed LAP area along Mount Carmel Road, Mount Carmel Avenue and Friarsland Road. Due to its proximity, all development within the LAP area will have significant impact on our members, in particular the development of the Central Mental Hospital site.

Yours sincerely,

Úna O'Shea
Roebuck Residents' Association

1. Central Mental Hospital (CMH) Issues

1.1 Traffic and Rat-Running

Increasing traffic and rat-running through the Roebuck area, from Dundrum Road to Taney Road and Goatstown Road, is an on-going issue for our members. With the provision of approximately 1,500 housing units in the CMH, this problem will get worse.

There is concern among residents that a new access-way into and out of the CMH will be built along the Rosemount playing fields (as, aside from the current entrance on Dundrum Road, there is no other obvious location on the periphery), leading to a significant increase in traffic along Mount Carmel and Larchfield Roads. The rush hour traffic on the Dundrum and Goatstown Roads is already at peak capacity.

1.2 Public Transport

Improvements to the public transport system would go some way in helping to alleviate the traffic problem. The Luas is currently very overcrowded at peak times, and with upcoming development further along the Green line (e.g. Cherrywood etc.) the overcrowding will get worse. The plans for the new Metro Link are of concern. The estimate of between 2 and 6 years of closure of the Luas line in order to upgrade to the new system is difficult to understand, as this will lead to substantial problems for the area.

1.3 Pedestrian and Cyclist Permeability and Prioritisation

Pedestrian and cyclist permeability through the CMH over to the Goatstown Road and UCD would also help alleviate traffic problems, and should be given priority.

Dundrum Road is very narrow, and consequently dangerous for cyclists and pedestrians. It's hard to see how this road could be widened to accommodate wider footpaths and cycle lanes. Therefore other solutions should be prioritised, and investigations carried out into the possibility of cycleways/paths along the Slang River or Luas line.

The Slang river greenway should be continued through the LAP area, and joined up with the Dodder linear park in Milltown. The culverting of this river in this area has led to many issues: flooding, a negative impact on biodiversity, restriction on the use of a natural and obvious greenway route, and is visually very unappealing.

1.4 Park and Leisure Facilities

There is a significant dearth of civic, cultural, community, park and leisure facilities in the area. We would like to see the main civic, cultural and community facilities located in Dundrum village, and the park and leisure facilities located in the CMH site.

The wall between the Rosemount playing fields and the CMH site should be opened up,

creating a parkland area between the two sites. One which could accommodate a MUGA (Multi Use Games Area), an indoor community space for smaller local needs, a playground*, and other leisure facilities for older children/teenagers (skate park etc.). Considering the lack of a public pool in the area, space could potentially also be created on this site for a new public swimming pool.

*There is no playground in the greater Dundrum area, except for the private one in Airfield.

1.5 Housing for the Elderly

The Dundrum area has mainly 3 – 5 bedroom houses in both private and social units. A number of these homes are low occupancy houses with elderly residents. The residential property tax, maintenance, landscaping and heating of these homes is a tremendous burden on people with limited or reduced income. Many residents would move to sheltered units if there were such units available in the Dundrum area. The lack of available sheltered units for elderly home owners has resulted in a number of large homes remaining occupied by one or two people. This is both unsustainable and uneconomic for these residents and the wider community. This affects both private and social housing equally.

The solution is to integrate sheltered homes in suitable areas, where possible. Due to the existing amenities and public transportation available in Dundrum, all areas within the LAP area are suitable for sheltered units. In many countries this approach has proven to be extremely successful.

- The sheltered housing residents are happier in a modern well-insulated unit with little or no maintenance required.
- These sheltered communities offer improved social interaction with support structures for these residents.
- Residents feel more secure than in a stand-alone house.
- Should a sheltered resident care requirements increase over the years it is much easier to provide assistance within a sheltered housing environment than in a house e.g. lifts are provided, bathrooms are already wheelchair-enabled etc.
- These facilities enable the resident to remain in the sheltered accommodation far longer than in a house.
- This approach also frees up large homes for use by families seeking homes with gardens.

It is a win-win for the residents, the new occupiers of the houses, and the wider community.

Economically this approach is far cheaper than building family type homes in new developments. It is much more economical to build a fifty unit sheltered housing building than fifty semi-detached homes, especially where the land price is included in the evaluation.

We ask that DLRCoCo gives consideration to this approach and applies a minimum provision of sheltered units in large residential schemes of over

25 houses.

The population is ageing and if we don't make provision for sheltered units now we will be in a dire situation in the future. Fuel poverty, financial problems, social supports and care provision are all concerns for the elderly, their families and the community. Were this approach applied to the future development of the CMH lands, this would provide much needed sheltered accommodation in tandem with freeing up large family houses at a fraction of the cost of providing new houses.

1.6 Collaboration and Consultation

There should be collaboration and consultation with the local community at every stage of development of the CMH site. Local residents' associations and community groups should be consulted with in order to achieve the best possible outcome for the greater community.

1.7 Building Heights and Ownership

We note the lifting of restrictions on building heights. We wish to state that our preference is for low to medium height development in the CHM site. As this would be appropriate for the area.

Thought should also be given to ways to restrict block-buying of apartments and houses by buy-to-let commercial landlords. The CMH site is a national/community asset, and as such all effort should be made to create a sense of community there.

1.8 Preservation of Historical Elements

We are aware that there are buildings of historic interest on the CMH site. We would like to see the facades and other elements of interest preserved.

We would also like to see parts of the surrounding cut-granite wall preserved. The stone removed could be used to create new architectural elements in the future site.

2. Dundrum Village Issues

2.1 Improvements for Pedestrians and Cyclists

Main Street:

Currently it is dangerous to cycle on the Main Street, and the footpaths in certain sections are very narrow. Ideally we would like to see the Main Street pedestrianised. Alternatively, we would like to see wider footpaths and cycle lanes. To create this extra space, the shop fronts could be removed, and the buildings brought back to the original terraced frontage.

Dundrum Bypass:

There should be improved pedestrian and cyclist permeability from Main Street to the Dundrum Bypass.

Cycle Parking:

There is currently very little cycle parking on Dundrum Main Street. Most bikes are locked to poles on the footpath, or to railings. There is also an inadequate amount of cycle parking at the Dundrum Town Centre. There is a small amount of cycle parking near the cinema entrance, and also some close to Jamie's restaurant, off the Ballinteer Road. Both locations are frequently full. We are aware that there is a public cycle park across the Sandyford Road, in the DLR carpark, however it does not encourage cycling if you have to park your bike there, and then walk a distance to the shopping centre. There should be at least double the amount of cycle parking in the front plaza of the Dundrum Town Centre.

Taney Rd/Dundrum Road/Luas Bridge:

The junction of Taney Road and Dundrum Road, under the Luas bridge, is very unwelcoming for both cyclists and pedestrians. The distance to cross the road here is quite long, and the pelican lights always turn orange before reaching the other side, making it quite stressful for pedestrians with mobility issues, or those pushing buggies or accompanying young children. Yes, it is possible to cross by walking all the way from one end of the Luas bridge to the other, therefore bypassing the road crossing, but this is significantly longer, and not feasible for many people.

2.2 Civic, Community and Cultural Space

Provision should be made for an outdoor civic space/plaza in the village, to accommodate things such as a farmers' market, or simply even a village Christmas tree.

There should also be an indoor civic, community and cultural space in a central location in the village.

An improved library could be located in the new civic centre, and the current Carnegie building put to other community use. The current library is very poor in resources, and not fit for purpose.

Gallery space is something that is missing from Dundrum. There is no visual arts scene in the area as a consequence. A useful gallery exhibition space is something that should be incorporated into the civic centre.

Investigations should be made to identify publicly owned space in the greater village area, and the possibility of a land swap with Hammerson in order to source such a site.

2.3 Residential and Retail Development in the Village

We would like to see people living within the village. The return of a local community to the village would lead to demand for shops such as a local greengrocers, butchers, hardware etc. Local neighbourhood shops like these are missing from Dundrum village, and their reinstatement would add immeasurably to the area's sense of community.

There should also be accommodation made for smaller, non-large chain retailers, who currently cannot afford to trade in Dundrum. In particular, smaller Irish fashion retailers would be a very welcome addition to the area. Space should also be made to accommodate pop-up shops, selling or exhibiting local or seasonal high quality craft. All of which would add much-needed retail diversity to Dundrum, which is currently dominated by large chain international stores.

2.4 Buses

We note that there will be more buses travelling through Dundrum Village after the new Bus Connects plan takes effect. These buses should be routed along the Dundrum Bypass instead, reducing traffic, noise, and pollution on the Main Street.