



Uimhir Thagarta Uathúil: WFD-C2-71

Údar: Waterford Older People's Council

Stádas: Submitted

Submission: Waterford Older People's Council

Comhairliúchán:

Draft Waterford City and County Development Plan 2022 - 2028

Litir Chumhdaigh

The Waterford Older People's Council (WOPC) welcomes this opportunity to contribute to the shaping of the 2022-2028 Waterford City and County Development Plan. We also wish to acknowledge the work and availability of Waterford Council officials during the public consultation process and this during a very challenging period for public interaction.

Whereas our main focus in this document in responding to the draft plan is on housing and transport we believe that as the voice of all older people in Waterford City and County, the WOPC has an interest in how Waterford Council intends to respond to the other challenges facing our society, particularly in the areas of climate change, community well being, healthy environment, biodiversity and Lifelong Learning. We, therefore, support any measures proposed in the draft plan that will lead to action and results in those areas mentioned above.

The participation of older people in decision making is of particular interest and concern and we encourage Waterford Council to promote and facilitate meaningful consultation not only through our continuing participation in the PPN but also through the Age Friendly Alliance structures particularly the Thematic Groups. These structures, particularly the Thematic Groups, have the potential of having the views of older people considered in a meaningful way and we hereby recommend that recommendations made at Thematic Group meetings be given due weight in Waterford Council proceedings such as Council meetings by having the matter of Age Friendly issues placed on the Agenda of Council meetings if not on a monthly basis then at the very least 4 times a year. As an example of Thematic Group input the recent recommendation from the Built and Natural Environment Thematic Group re the need for Waterford Council to carry out a Radon survey of older houses subject to Radon penetration particularly in known hotspots such as Cheekpoint.

Whereas some of the above may be considered to be operational matters we strongly recommend that actions to respond to well being and sustainability, particularly as they affect older people such as Lifelong Learning, walking and transport connectivity be incorporated in the plan.

Observations:

Chapter 5: Transport and Mobility

Caibidil: Volume 1 » Part 3: City and County Policy Objectives » Chapter 5: Transport and Mobility

Transport and Mobility - Main Opinions,

In looking at the development of infrastructure and transport within the WCCC development plan it is our understanding that the development plan will allow for the improvement of the foundational services for economic growth and the improvement of the quality of life for the community. As our city and county now experience an increase in an ageing population the need for greater inclusion of this cohort needs a higher dependency of attention than from the previous development plans.

Our required needs are based on information outlined in the National Planning Framework (NPF) 2040, National Development Plans (NDP) 2018-2027, Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region, A Sustainable Transport Future Policy 2009-2020, Connecting Ireland Transport Plans ,The Disability Act 2005, The National Broadband Plan (NBP) and the United Nations Sustainable Goals.

In conclusion, we request that our need be included in the Waterford Metropolitan Area Transport Plans (WMATS).

Main Reasons.

In making our submission based on the criteria as set out, The Older People's Council (OPC) Executive is of the opinion that our submission will help give us a city that will have complete connectivity to all amenities and services via a dedicated public transport infrastructure. The development of this infrastructure will allow for the completion of improved bus corridors, cycle lanes and walking facilities which will help to support the ageing population of the City and County which is expected to reach 25% approx., of the population by the year 2040.

While it is now recognised by the World Health Organisation that the lack of the provision of a dedicated public transport service is a contributing factor to loneliness and social isolation within society our submission is aimed to help alleviate such situations.

Main requests

The development of a transport and infrastructural amenity to deliver connectivity, services and supports that will support an improved quality of life for all citizens. This the Older People's Council Executive feel can be achieved by incorporating the following into the development plan.

1. A transport service that meets the need of the older person containing **a number of transport hubs and park and ride facilities** on the outer periphery of the city,(Butlerstown Business Park, Waterford Regional Sports Complex and Ballygunner Cross). They would allow ease of connectivity via a dedicated quality bus corridor to hospitals, local amenities, the city centre and other required services.

All planning of these services should be in line with the WMATS and the "Connecting Ireland Transport"programme.

A complete review under the Waterford Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy for improved service for Tramore and its surrounding areas. This review to include all services and service providers providing connectivity in the areas of Dunmore East, Passage East, Faithlegg and Crooke and the development of a quality transport corridor to the city.

For Dungarvan a number of sites including the old Glass Factory car park, car park at the Farmers Mart, at Abbeyside or Dungarvan GAA clubs may be suitable locations for designated park and ride facilities.

A review of the development of rural settlement with a plan to support communities with a comprehensive public service to suit their requirements.

The development of local town services in Dungarvan to service the increasing population of the local area. Examples would be a town service giving connectivity to Ballinroad, Garrynageragh and Kilminion to Dungarvan. A service should also extend to the west of Dungarvan to include An Rinn and its surroundings.

In other large towns sites for park and stride facilities would be located not more than a 10-minute walk from the town centre.

Parking facilities should include toilet facilities and EV charging points as per policy.

2. Proper facilities at key transport hubs and park and rides would ensure there is a structure in place for the universal movement of the ageing population and those with mobility issues across the city and county. (Bus shelters, toilet facilities etc). This can also include modern charging points for electric vehicles and dedicated cycle facilities.

3. The continuous development of low platform vehicles for ease of access through Local Link and Private operators.

Low platform vehicles should allow for ease of access for those with disabilities. There should be good customer service and the service should be offered at an affordable cost to the passenger.

The introduction of low emission public transport vehicles to comply with guidelines on low carbon emission policies.

4. More involvement and controls on the delivery of refined transport services by local authority rather than by a central body such as the NTA.

WCCC input in all transport plans are developed in line with national plans. However, overall national plans are mostly based on statistics and may not be suitable to the WCCC requirements therefore a bigger focus is required locally to sustain good connectivity within our communities.

5. A review of hackney licences to accommodate late night services with a specific function to accommodate older persons journeys especially in a rural setting.

Dedicated taxis are required to fill the gap where public transportation cannot meet the needs of the isolated person or those with impeded mobility.

Development to include Demand Response Routes in isolated areas in the west of the county to help combat social isolation in rural hinterlands.

6. An overall assessment of the need for more age friendly and disability parking within the cities and towns. Suggestion of 100% increase required on these needs.

Using the Beta Project initiative will allow the planners to discover the need for more disability and age friendly parking within the city and in towns.

7. The removal of some of the general on-street public car parking spaces in towns and in the city to allow for the provision of wider footpaths for safer walking; increased cycle lanes and a need to accommodate standard and electronic mobility aids.

8. A feasibility study to help improve the quality of minor road access to main roads and footpath replacement involving OPC input.

This study could be reviewed under the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines

9. Development of the “Greenway” to include a management control system on cyclists, demarcation lines for walking and the provision of toilet facilities and seating which will allow for a more age friendly environment.

A review of policy in helping break down the challenges preventing a public transport service along the Greenway and on to areas such as Mahon Falls.

Development of the former Tramore-Waterford rail line to a Greenway with access at various points to suit the needs of the public.

1

Chapter 7: Housing and Sustainable Communities

Caibidil: Volume 1 » Part 3: City and County Policy Objectives » Chapter 7: Housing and Sustainable Communities

Housing

We acknowledge and welcome the several measures in the Draft that deal with the housing needs of a growing older cohort of the population. The concept of the 10 minute urban area, revitalization of town centres including the provision of suitable housing, the consideration of universal design are among the recommendations made in our earlier submission and these are indeed welcomed. However, regarding some of our earlier recommendations we would like to see an appropriate level of detail added to the Plan. All of this is outlined in greater detail in what follows in this submission.

1. A housing strategy is more than ensuring a supply of suitable houses and apartments, it has to be an integrated plan ensuring that our older people will have the certainty of affordable, health inducing, secure, environmentally sustainable housing options anchored in ‘an integration of supports especially between the housing and health sectors’
2. ‘A housing policy for older people is broader and more complex than the mere provision of houses.’
3. The Age Friendly Strategy adopted by Waterford City and County Council and the Age Friendly Alliance in 2017 highlights the very significant growth in the older population relative to total population for example in Waterford City and County the percentage of people in the over 60 year age group increased from 13.7% of total population in 2002 to 20.3% in 2016.
4. It is essential that the requirements of the population in the 60 plus age group are taken into account in each of the programme groups of the new County Development Plan, requirements which will in effect benefit the whole population.
5. We believe that the option of independent living should be central to our housing strategy: Therefore, adapting and retrofitting houses to make them secure, environmentally safe and less costly to run needs to be prioritised in keeping with the principle of Universal Design.

6. We recommend that 50% of apartment construction exceed the current minimum space and design requirements e.g. width of doors, larger rooms, larger bathroom, etc making mobility considerations paramount.
7. Furthermore, we recommend that 30% of all new housing should incorporate Universal Design principles. A dedicated pilot project along the lines of the Inchicore Housing with Support Demonstration Prototype Project¹ ought to be considered as part of the Council's housing policy to be implemented during the lifetime of its next Development Plan.
8. The new Waterford Development Plan should promote **Age Friendly Neighbourhoods** which provide a range of services including transportation links. This could be facilitated by zoning, by public acquisition of greenfield and especially brown field sites near clusters of services such as the Ardkeen Village Complex in Waterford city and the construction of innovative retirement campuses to facilitate the development of Age Friendly Neighbourhoods.
9. We also recommend the provision by the Council and or Voluntary Housing Associations of suitable accommodation to meet the needs of an Ageing Population adjacent to appropriate services.
10. In granting Planning for new Residential Development the Council should ensure that Private Developers provide an appropriate mix of house sizes a percentage of which should be suitable for older people.
11. The promotion by the Council of the concept of Universal Housing Design, facilitating lifelong living especially for older people in their own homes.
12. Where the need arises the Council should provide or support voluntary/community groups to provide small groups of sheltered housing for the older people on the lines of scheme provided by the Community in Ballymacarbry or the various schemes across the country, notably the Ava Housing, the Great Northern Haven in Dundalk which features two bedroom units plus a 'research' apartment.
13. Waterford Council has an opportunity in this matter to lead the way by including in the Plan provision for a pilot scheme of housing for older people where innovative concepts such as universal design, co-management, community provision, appropriate percentage of two bedroom units would be incorporated and serve as a model for private developers. Different design and operational models accessible in Ireland and abroad could be examined during the planning stage of such an innovative model for Waterford.