



Uimhir Thagarta Uathúil: WFD-C2-280

Údar: Ballinroad Community Group Committee

Stádas: Submitted

Submission: Ballinroad Community Group Submission

Comhairliúchán:

Draft Waterford City and County Development Plan 2022 - 2028

Litir Chumhdaigh

Ballinroad Community Group was established several years ago when local people recognised that although the population of Ballinroad had increased massively as a result of a surge in housing developments (facilitated by zoning under previous development plans), the maintenance and development of necessary infrastructure had not kept pace. And from a road safety perspective in particular it was agreed that the infrastructure that pre-dated the period of housing development expansion was not fit for purpose.

Thanks to a phase of Smarter Travel development, followed by good and much appreciated works carried out by the Roads Dept of the Council in recent years, the situation has improved significantly. However, it is still very much a case of playing catch up to upgrade roads and footpaths long after these upgrades became necessary as a result of the population increase that was facilitated by previous county development plans, but which despite being anticipated was not planned or prepared for.

Two of the busiest roads in Ballinroad do not have footpaths (or cyclepaths) and lighting along their full length. For the laudable statements and policy objectives regarding Sustainable Communities, Placemaking, and indeed Climate Change, contained in the draft Development Plan to be practically meaningful and not just aspirational, they must be matched with concrete action on the ground to continue overdue improvements already underway or to start improvements that should have been done years ago if infrastructure had been developed to match the pace of housing development, as might reasonably have been expected by the people of Ballinroad.

The road from Ballinroad Cross to Garranbane National School is not only a busy road due to the vehicular traffic going to and from the school from the population settlement in Ballinroad. It is also a busy commuter route linking Ballinroad and points beyond with the N25. While there is work currently underway to install footpaths and other safety enhancements at either end of this road, for the most part it is akin to a country boreen. It is not safe for children to walk or cycle to and from school, which results in unavoidable and environmentally unfriendly car journeys.

The road from Ballinroad Cross to Clonea roundabout similarly does not have a footpath (or a cyclepath) along its full length. This is despite it being the main route for people from the housing estates around Ballinroad Cross to access the amenities off the Clonea roundabout, i.e. the Community Hall (including creche), the tennis court, the soccer club, and the Greenway. Despite being one of the villages nearest to the Greenway Ballinroad has possibly the least safe pedestrian access to it, particularly during the summer (or year-round during the pandemic) when motorists come off the N25 and go through Ballinroad (often at high speed) to get to the Greenway and to Clonea beyond, making the road even more unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists. People living in Ballinroad are likely as not to end up driving to the

Greenway and taking up scarce parking spaces at the car parks at Scart. These vehicle journeys are necessary for safety purposes, but they not only take up Greenway car park spaces that could otherwise be available to tourists, they are also bad for the environment.

And in relation to the Greenway car park, Ballinroad Community Group contends that the Council should take reasonable steps to ensure safer parking at peak visitor times, i.e. prevent dangerous parking of cars on approach verges when the car park is full, prevent parking and turning in the cul de sac at the end of the entrance road to the car parks, and more clearly mark out the road surface at the junction of the Greenway and the road leading from the car parks in order to more clearly delineate between vehicular and pedestrian/cyclist spaces.

Ballinroad Community Group recognises and appreciates that Development Objective DGD06 has been carried over from the previous development plan. This specific development objective states that "as the opportunities arise the Council shall provide a footpath/cycle-path, public lighting and traffic calming on the L3012 Road to connect Ballinroad Village with Garranbane National School and along the L3011 linking Ballinroad with the Waterford Greenway." However, based on experience to date we are of the view that this objective is not worded strongly enough. Firstly, given that it is largely a carry over from the previous plan going back to 2011, it is clear that the objective has not been met in the intervening 10 years. Secondly, golden opportunities that have arisen even quite recently in the 10 years since the last plan have not been grasped by the Council to ensure that the infrastructure identified in the last plan were put in place. A case in point is the Council's own development of the Na Fearnóga housing development on the L3011 linking Ballinroad with the Waterford Greenway. The actual relevant development objective from the 2011-2017 (extended) county development plan was (DO4): "As opportunities arise, the Council shall provide a new footpath/cyclepaths through the village." Despite this clear and simple objective being in place at the time the Council developed its new housing estate it did not (and still has not) availed of this opportunity to carry out what is probably the most pressing road safety improvement needed in Ballinroad, i.e. a well-lit raised footpath along the full length of the road from Ballinroad Cross to Clonea roundabout - even just on one side of the road would be a major improvement over the current unsafe situation. In fact, the council has left an area of road that it widened for sightlines which would have been ideal for a footpath with a rough gravel surface that is very difficult to walk on, meaning that most people have to walk on the edge of the road, which due to lack of lining and resurfacing makes them appear to oncoming motorists as if they are nearly in the centre of the road. It is arguably more dangerous now than before the road was widened.

Ballinroad Community Group does not wish to appear to be ungrateful for the improvements that have been made in recent years, for which we are genuinely thankful; but it would be remiss of us not to take this rare opportunity of a development plan consultation process to point out that previous development plans facilitated the massive growth in the population of Ballinroad without at the same time planning for the upgrades in local infrastructure necessary to support this population growth. And we feel that it is not unreasonable for us to expect and request that the new development plan remedies the problems carried over from previous ones. Successive plans that contain the same or similar unachieved objectives should probably be called something other than plans after a while, or else the credibility and integrity of the plan making process will be undermined before too long.

With this in mind, and in the hope of seeing progress sooner rather than later, Ballinroad Community Group submits that specific development objective DGD06 be reworded along the following lines so that it is strengthened and made more specific:

DGD06A: It is an objective of the Council to provide a footpath/cycle-path, public lighting and traffic calming on the L3012 Road to connect Ballinroad Village with Garranbane National School within the first two years of the lifetime of the new plan in recognition of the longstanding need to address the legacy under-provision of infrastructure that

should have accompanied the rapid and significant development of Ballinroad that was encouraged and facilitated by previous development plans.

DGD06B: It is an objective of the Council to provide a footpath/cycle-path, public lighting and traffic calming on the L3011 linking Ballinroad with the Clonea Roundabout, Ballinroad Hall, Ballinroad Soccer Club and the Waterford Greenway within the first two years of the lifetime of the new plan in recognition of the longstanding need to address the legacy under-provision of infrastructure that should have accompanied the rapid and significant development of Ballinroad that was encouraged and facilitated by previous development plans.

DGD06C: It is an objective of the Council to arrange for the completion of an independent road safety audit upon completion of DGD06A and DGD06B to identify any further desirable road safety improvements for Ballinroad.

Ballinroad Community Group also strongly supports the submission of Ballinroad Soccer Club with respect to calling on the Council to proactively intervene to assist the expansion of the club. And the Group also strongly supports the submission of Ballinroad Playground Committee with respect to the call for the inclusion of a specific development objective for the provision of an inclusive and accessible public playground by the Council in Ballinroad. In relation to the provision of a playground for the community in Ballinroad, the Community Group would also submit that the Council should do its best to ensure that it is accessible on foot, by bike and by car for the benefit of users with different abilities.

Ballinroad Community Group also supports calls for a public swimming pool for the Dungarvan area.

Finally, Ballinroad Community Group is conscious that the expansion of housing and the related growth in population in Ballinroad in recent times has resulted in inherent local demand for housing. The generation who grew up in the wave of housing estates that were facilitated under previous development plans have come of age and are looking for their own homes in the area so that they can bring up their families where they were reared. We are concerned that there may be insufficient availability of housing stock to meet this local demand, let alone the demand from outside the area, and we request that the Council consider if sufficient land has been zoned in the draft plan for residential purposes to meet the ongoing needs for housing of the local population in Ballinroad during the lifetime of the plan.

Observations:

Chapter 8: Placemaking

Caibidil: Volume 1 » Part 3: City and County Policy Objectives » Chapter 8:
Placemaking

Ballinroad Community Group was established several years ago when local people recognised that although the population of Ballinroad had increased massively as a result of a surge in housing developments (facilitated by zoning under previous development plans), the maintenance and development of necessary infrastructure had not kept pace. And from a road safety perspective in particular it was agreed that the infrastructure that pre-dated the period of housing development expansion was not fit for purpose.

Thanks to a phase of Smarter Travel development, followed by good and much appreciated works carried out by the Roads Dept of the Council in recent years, the situation has improved significantly. However, it is still very much a case of playing catch up to upgrade roads and footpaths long after these upgrades became necessary as a result of the population increase that was facilitated by previous county development plans, but which despite being anticipated was not planned or prepared for.

Two of the busiest roads in Ballinroad do not have footpaths (or cyclepaths) and lighting along their full length. For the laudable statements and policy objectives regarding Sustainable Communities, Placemaking, and indeed Climate Change, contained in the draft Development Plan to be practically meaningful and not just aspirational,

they must be matched with concrete action on the ground to continue overdue improvements already underway or to start improvements that should have been done years ago if infrastructure had been developed to match the pace of housing development, as might reasonably have been expected by the people of Ballinroad.

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Ballinroad Community Group recognises and appreciates that Development Objective DGD06 has been carried over from the previous development plan. This specific development objective states that "as the opportunities arise the Council shall provide a footpath/cycle-path, public lighting and traffic calming on the L3012 Road to connect Ballinroad Village with Garranbane National School and along the L3011 linking Ballinroad with the Waterford Greenway." However, based on experience to date we are of the view that this objective is not worded strongly enough. Firstly, given that it is largely a carry over from the previous plan going back to 2011, it is clear that the objective has not been met in the intervening 10 years. Secondly, golden opportunities that have arisen even quite recently in the 10 years since the last plan have not been grasped by the Council to ensure that the infrastructure identified in the last plan were put in place. A case in point is the Council's own development of the Na Fearnóga housing development on the L3011 linking Ballinroad with the Waterford Greenway. The actual relevant development objective from the 2011-2017 (extended) county development plan was (DO4): "As opportunities arise, the Council shall provide a new footpath/cyclepaths through the village." Despite this clear and simple objective being in place at the time the Council developed its new housing estate it did not (and still has not) availed of this opportunity to carry out what is probably the most pressing road safety improvement needed in Ballinroad, i.e. a well-lit raised footpath along the full length of the road from Ballinroad Cross to Clonea roundabout - even just on one side of the road would be a major improvement over the current unsafe situation.

In fact, the council has left an area of road that it widened for sightlines which would have been ideal for a footpath with a rough gravel surface that is very difficult to walk on, meaning that most people have to walk on the edge of the road, which due to lack of lining and resurfacing makes them appear to oncoming motorists as if they are nearly in the centre of the road. It is arguably more dangerous now than before the road was widened.

Ballinroad Community Group does not wish to appear to be ungrateful for the improvements that have been made in recent years, for which we are genuinely thankful; but it would be remiss of us not to take this rare opportunity of a development plan consultation process to point out that previous development plans facilitated the massive

growth in the population of Ballinroad without at the same time planning for the upgrades in local infrastructure necessary to support this population growth. And we feel that it is not unreasonable for us to expect and request that the new development plan remedies the problems carried over from previous ones. Successive plans that contain the same or similar unachieved objectives should probably be called something other than plans after a while, or else the credibility and integrity of the plan making process will be undermined before too long. With this in mind, and in the hope of seeing progress sooner rather than later, Ballinroad Community Group submits that specific development objective DGD06 be reworded along the following lines so that it is strengthened and made more specific:

DGD06A: It is an objective of the Council to provide a footpath/cycle-path, public lighting and traffic calming on the L3012 Road to connect Ballinroad Village with Garrahan National School within the first two years of the lifetime of the new plan in recognition of the longstanding need to address the legacy under-provision of infrastructure that should have accompanied the rapid and significant development of Ballinroad that was encouraged and facilitated by previous development plans.

DGD06B: It is an objective of the Council to provide a footpath/cycle-path, public lighting and traffic calming on the L3011 linking Ballinroad with the Clonea Roundabout, Ballinroad Hall, Ballinroad Soccer Club and the Waterford Greenway within the first two years of the lifetime of the new plan in recognition of the longstanding need to address the legacy under-provision of infrastructure that should have accompanied the rapid and significant development of Ballinroad that was encouraged and facilitated by previous development plans.

DGD06C: It is an objective of the Council to arrange for the completion of an independent road safety audit upon completion of DGD06A and DGD06B to identify any further desirable road safety improvements for Ballinroad. Ballinroad Community Group also strongly supports the submission of Ballinroad Soccer Club with respect to calling on the Council to proactively intervene to assist the expansion of the club. And the Group also strongly supports the submission of Ballinroad Playground Committee with respect to the call for the inclusion of a specific development objective for the provision of an inclusive and accessible public playground by the Council in Ballinroad. In relation to the provision of a playground for the community in Ballinroad, the Community Group would also submit that the Council should do its best to ensure that it is accessible on foot, by bike and by car for the benefit of users with different abilities.

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We are concerned that there may be insufficient availability of housing stock to meet this local demand, let alone the demand from outside the area, and we request that the Council consider if sufficient land has been zoned in the draft plan for residential purposes to meet the ongoing needs for housing of the local population in Ballinroad during the lifetime of the plan.

Documents Attached: Níl

Teorainneacha Gafa ar an léarscáil: Níl