

Q & A Report

Pre-Draft Development Plan consultation Webinar on Local Placemaking

Date: August 19th 2020

Question: Thanks for organising these open-access events! I welcome that your plan is evidence based so I am curious how -so swiftly after lockdown- you can capture the feedback/evidence of the seismic change in attitudes to our local sense of place/amenities? Is there any thought to use 3rd levels to produce/analyse data (say vacancy of towns) or for how Waterford city could adopt the Parisian model of mapping/providing a full range of facilities within 15mins walk/cycle from home?

Answer: The development plan will have its core the objective to create 10 minute neighbourhoods in the city and larger towns and throughout the rural towns across the county. This will focus on provision of connected and integrated public open spaces along with a mix of services we use each day. There is also a body of work which will require us to retrofit permeability across our neighbourhoods to assist in delivering modal shift to sustainable modes of transport.

The recent emergency measures have raised public awareness of the health, wellbeing and community benefits of having convenient access to amenity spaces locally, but they are not new concepts in planning for sustainable communities and places. That the issues are more prominent in the public domain and discourse will hopefully assist the development plan in identifying some specific measure, scheduling action to deliver amenities and in time support the drawdown of funding to deliver these important amenities over time.

There would certainly be scope to forge further links between the local authority and the TU in terms of enhancing the quality of our towns and city among other matters. We will be liaising further with the TU as part of the pre-draft consultation process at which time such closer collaboration can be considered in more detail.

Question: How can we access base line data?

Answer: Some of the key indicators are included in the Strategic Issues Paper and we are currently preparing a series of maps and reports to illustrate relevant issues including socio-economic, housing and travel data. Some of this data and associated strategies will be available as part of the draft development plan.

Question: What is the time frame for the 3 Local Area Plans and how can communities engage?

Answer: People are urged to make their views on the future of our larger town known as early as possible. The more strategic issues for our towns will be dealt with in the current City and County Plan review. The Local Area Plan process can only commence once the City and County Plan has been adopted (i.e. mid 2022) so we need to ensure that all of the major decisions are taken now with only points of detail remaining to be addressed in the Local Area Plans. The LAPs will be considered for review once the development plan has been finalised in Q2 of 2022. The LAPs will be required to be consistent with the main core strategy of the city and county development plan that directs issues such as where population, employment and infrastructure will be located.

Question: As of now what % of new builds by the Council will reflect Universal Design principles and how best to express this issue in our submission?

Answer: All development carried out by the Council is required to be compliant with building standards and is subject to accessibility audit. The development plan process will engage with groups like the OPC and the PPN to raise these issues with the relevant elected members. We are also consulting with the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design as the concept of lifelong housing is very important to creating places and communities. The development plan policies will also seek to create more walkable communities and places to assist in bringing people closer to the services they use on a daily basis.

Question: How do you plan to get people to come back and live in the centre of Cappoquin?

Answer: the development plan can assist in attracting population by way of ensuring adequate infrastructure and services are available for residential and commercial uses, zone an appropriate quantum of land at suitable locations to facilitate growth and provide policy and incentives for regeneration of existing properties while facilitating alternatives to one-off housing in the surrounding countryside. Active land management is also a new approach to bringing redundant properties back into use and we will be pursuing such measures as part of the development plan policy. It is important to remember that these policies assist greatly in drawing down grants for renewal projects as referred to by Morris under the RRDF and URDF under the National Planning Framework and Ireland 2040.

Question: Well done Morris on your presentation and work "reclaiming" spaces in the Viking Triangle. It is a major challenge to spread the concentration of activity westward along the quays so love to discuss this as well as your work on towns in more detail from my research.

Answer: We are in the process of looking at the area west of city centre would be happy to

discuss. We are also making some progress with towns, again happy to discuss.

It is also important to remember that while there are targets for regenerative population growth on brownfield regeneration sites, there are significant challenges in setting out areas for new growth in the city south west and north west neighbourhoods. We would welcome ideas as to how such areas can be developed so as to provide an appropriate mix of house types, layout and tenure, a mix of community and commercial uses required to create the 10 minute neighbourhood, amenities and spaces etc.

Question: Good to make these events so open but webinars have proliferated it gives voice to many perspectives so perhaps you could consider a better gender/ ethnicity balance! Is it not out of sync to have all white middle-age white males presenting?

Answer: Our primary objective with the series of webinars is to inform the discussion by using internal staff where possible so as to keep the discussion focussed on issues that the development plan can address and thereby manage expectations as such. Two of the presentations last night were by Rose and Bernie our conservation and heritage officers respectively while Jenny Beresford will be presenting tomorrow on behalf of Dungarvan Chamber.

Question: Maurice, WCCC has done wonderful work in creating a much more human centred, connected space in the city centre. Most of the roads/streets/spaces therein comply with the principles of good design, as outlined in DMURS. However, in contrast, in the sub-urbs, where most people live, WCCC has enabled single-entrance, cul-de-sac design housing estates that lack connectivity, permeability and proximity to adjoining estates or any services at all, including public transport, and have little land use mix. Why is this and what is WCCC going to do about it - and make the sub-urbs DMURS-compliant?

Answer: Thank you, on the issue of connectivity, yes, a very good point which we agree with and a legacy issue which needs to be addressed. In our newer suburbs for example Killbarry we are looking at connectivity and permeability between individual developments. The intention would be to apply these master planning principals possibly through local area plans. These would also address land uses, sustainable transport etc. Within established neighbourhoods the solutions are far more complex and need to sensitively addressed on an opportunity by opportunity basis.

Question: In relation to energising and re-energising the City Centre would it be feasible to enhance smaller streets e.g. Gladstone St. by creating canopied shopping areas rather than focusing on developing indoor shopping areas?

Answer: The animation of the city centre and its peripheral streets can be supported by

the development plan and the concept of the Cultural Quarter in an around O'Connell Street would be a good example. That being said the canopied shopping example is not something specifically that the development plan can deliver on its own but if you have other ideas in this regard these can be considered in terms of the broader use and occupancy of the city centre to support vibrancy and vitality.

Question: Are groups representing people with disabilities generally consulted when regeneration projects are being designed? The Square in Dungarvan isn't great for wheelchair users since it was done up a number of years ago. How do we make sure future development is suitable for everyone to enjoy?

Answer: The general approach to devising regeneration projects involves a process where public consultation is employed to enhance design and address the needs of individuals and groups who engage directly with the design process and make written submissions. While designs are based on best practice in terms of design, layout and material finishes and are subject to an accessibility audit, it must be remembered that each project has its own individual set of challenges such as street gradients, traffic and other operational matters, layout of civil infrastructure, etc. It is therefore always advisable to engage directly in the public consultation process to ensure your issues are considered in a final agreed design. Notices and designs relating to such projects of scale are published in local press and on the council website. In addition the development plan will set out a schedule of development management standards which will be based on input from statutory and non statutory bodies, technical guidance documents and Ministerial Guidelines in place at the time. Making a written submission on the pre draft development plan setting out your issues would be timely and would help in informing our standards and policies.

Question: Thanks to all for last night's and tonight's presentations. Can the Council directly take into account the "Flemish Decree" or must it await a central government response or policy in relation to easing the requirement for a local link to an area when apply for permission to build a one-off rural house?

Answer: The consideration and formulation of policies relating to one-off housing in the open countryside will need to consider all relevant S28 Ministerial Guidelines in place at the time, the relevant policies of the National Planning Framework, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and the provisions of Section 10(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. The issue also needs to be considered within the context of overall housing requirements across the city and county.

Question: Will there be separate local plans - Tramore, Lismore, Portlaw or will plans for these towns be incorporated in the larger plan?

Answer: The more strategic issues for urban settlements such as population, land-use zoning, infrastructure provision will be dealt with in the City and County Development Plan. Points of detail relevant to the local context will be dealt with through Local Area Plans but these can only be prepared following adoption of the new City and County Development Plan in 2022.

Question: Exercise stations for older people in public spaces?

Answer: It would certainly be a practical use of public space given the health and social benefits and know that the OPC and Age Friendly Plan for Waterford would have it as key objectives within their own plans – I would urge that it be included as a submission identifying areas where this infrastructure would be required and in turn would assist in draw down of funding to provide such amenities across the City/County.

Question: What are the typical sizes of the different types of parks that Eoin is describing?

Answer: Typically park size from pocket to regional can range from 0.2 ha to 50ha.

Question: There is an aspiration for a new park of significant scale for Waterford. Is there a preferred location for this?

Answer: The development plan will be considering the optimum location for a regional scale park and network of parks across the city for amenity and biodiversity purposes and use for sustainable transport modes. If you have thoughts on where such parks should be developed please make a submission on the portal and on the place survey. You might also look at the presentations from last night, particularly the presentation by Bernie Guest, Heritage Officer.

Question: Great to hear that natural play opportunities which promote exploring and independence are included in planning particularly in view of the fact that many children do not have access to gardens.

Answer: Indeed this is the opportunity to ensure such are addressed within the development plan. It is also important that the opportunities for developing a network of such spaces across the city centre in particular are exploited so your thoughts on possible locations could be set out in a written submission.

Question: What barriers are there that might prevent the creation of a large national regional park in Waterford, which could be rewilded with native flora and fauna, to increase space maximised for biodiversity, as well as developing a novel social, recreation and tourism amenity?

Answer: The development plan will need to consider the location of a regional scale park and part of this should be devoted to a mix of uses in terms of biodiversity, habitat enhancement and general use by the public. The development plan will need to develop this concept along with a Blue Green Infrastructure strategy and the need to ensure there is a network of parks accessible within a 10 minute neighbourhood concept.

Question: Encouraging living above the shop idea and Living in the city. Is planning becoming more flexible to encourage this idea as the same as other European Cities? What are the thoughts of the planners? A stronger Economy is needed in the city, coming from city residence (after 6 pm). Thank you.

Answer: Living over the shop and city centre living are concepts that are strongly supported in national, regional and local planning policy. The new plan will certainly seek to deliver on this potential to create vibrant city and town centres and to provide much needed affordable and sustainable accommodation solutions.

Question: What can be done to increase and protect native tree cover and protect our hedgerow heritage across the county? Can our country roads be made safer for cycling and walking?

Answer: Restrictions on cutting hedgerows are set out in Section 40 of the Wildlife Act 1976 as amended by the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Heritage Act 2018. These Acts stipulate that it is an offence to destroy vegetation on uncultivated land between the 1st of March and the 31st of August each year. However where necessary the Council may carry out hedge cutting in order to reduce risk to road users, this is focused particularly at junctions etc where the overgrown hedges may pose a risk to road users. The development plan will be putting forward policies for protection of amenity trees, historic and significant hedgerows and Tree Preservation Orders where appropriate.

Question: Is there potential for new pocket sized parks within towns and cities?

Answer: We are constantly exploring the potential for pocket parks across the city and larger towns along with identifying opportunities to connect these where possible into a broader network so spaces for amenity and biodiversity purposes. Through policy objectives and land-use zoning the development plan will be seeking to facilitate and implement such amenity spaces.