Quality Design and Healthy Placemaking

Vision

Create a leading example in sustainable urban design and healthy placemaking that delivers attractive, connected, vibrant and well-functioning places to live, work, visit, socialise and invest in.

5.0 Introduction

In line with the provisions of the *National Planning Framework* (NPF) and the *Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy* (RSES) the quality of design and character of an area are critical factors for making places attractive and distinctive. 'Placemaking' which aims to strengthen the connection between people and the places they share, creating the right types of environments in which people can live work, visit, socialise and invest in, is a key factor in producing attractive and distinctive communities.

Healthy Placemaking seeks to protect and enhance the unique identity and character of places and to facilitate improvements to human wellbeing and the quality of life that comes from the interaction of people and their environment. The development of new strategic development areas alongside significant regeneration lands within South Dublin County further creates opportunities for the development of strong placemaking within the County, delivering attractive and sustainable environments in which to live.

The built environment plays an important role in both the wellbeing of the individual and in the success and vibrancy of the County. All new development in South Dublin County should be designed and delivered in a manner that recognises its importance in the future success of the County and our citizens.

Quality Design and Healthy Placemaking and Climate Action

A key element of healthy placemaking is the provision of a movement network that enables people to choose public transport and active travel measures as their first choice. We must proactively support the delivery of a transport network that offers people healthier modes of transport, modes that will help to reduce carbon emissions and reduce congestion. Streets should be designed for people to move and enjoy, where the space is shared by all users. This approach will play a key role in delivering more attractive places and creating opportunities to be physically active and reduce the negative consequences of car-based commuting.

It is the aim of this plan to achieve an efficient use of land with a focus on key urban centres, and to achieve development densities that can support vibrant, compact, walkable places that prioritise walking and cycling. The implementation of such measures requires a compact development form and when successfully achieved can play a significant role in climate action, reducing the need for car-based travel and carbon emissions while also facilitating opportunities for the use of more sustainable and renewable energy sources.

Policies and objectives which will have a climate-positive impact have been highlighted with the climate symbol.

The policies and objectives set out in this chapter are therefore wide ranging and are critical to maintaining and recognising our existing natural and built environment assets while also sensitively managing and positively influencing the future delivery

of sustainable housing and jobs growth, transport interventions and community infrastructure within the County. The creation of healthy and attractive places will also require ongoing improvements to physical infrastructure.

The implementation of such measures within this chapter and subsequent chapters when combined will contribute significantly towards the delivery of successful and sustainable, well-functioning and attractive Neighbourhoods within the County as visually depicted within Appendix 12 of this plan.

5.1 Policy Context

Development Plan policies and objectives must be consistent with national and regional planning policy as set out in the *National Planning Framework* (NPF) and *Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy* (RSES).

The NPF sets out a single vision and a shared set of goals for every community across the country expressed as 'National Strategic Outcomes'. NSOs specifically relevant to the delivery of sustainable neighbourhoods within South Dublin County relate to Compact Growth, Sustainable Mobility, Enhanced Accessibility, a Strong Economy, Enhanced Amenities and Heritage, Sustainable Management of Infrastructure, Access to Childcare, Education and Health Services and a Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society.

A number of other objectives are also relevant to delivering Quality Design and Healthy Placemaking:

- **National Policy Objective 4 of the NPF** requires planning authorities to *'Ensure the creation of attractive, liveable, well designed, high quality urban places that are home to diverse and integrated communities that enjoy a high quality of life and well-being'.*

- **In addition, National Policy Objective 13** sets out that *'In urban areas, the inclusion of planning and related standards, including in particular building height and car parking will be based on performance criteria that seek to achieve well-designed high-quality outcomes in order to achieve targeted growth. These standards will be subject to a range of tolerance that enables alternative solutions to be proposed to achieve stated outcomes, provided public safety is not compromised and the environment is suitably protected'.*

- **Regional Policy Objective 9.10 of the RSES** states *'In planning for the creation of healthy and attractive places, there is a need to provide alternatives to the car and to prioritise and promote cycling and walking in the design of streets and public spaces. Local authorities shall have regard to the Guiding Principles for 'Healthy Placemaking' and 'Integration of Land Use and Transport' as set out in the RSES and to national policy as set out in 'Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas' and the 'Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS)'.*

There are many other relevant national and regional policy objectives. These are referenced by number within individual policies and objectives of this chapter and are set out in full at Appendix 7.

5.2 Successful and Sustainable Neighbourhoods

In line with the provisions of Goal 11 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the NPF and the RSES, the delivery of sustainable neighbourhoods means creating the right environment which facilitates the delivery of safe and affordable housing, job opportunities, investment in public transport and active modes of transport, creates green public spaces and improves urban planning and management in an inclusive manner.

Successful and sustainable neighbourhoods require a range of local services and facilities, including employment, commercial, educational, health, spiritual, civic amenities, and services. The Development Plan has a key role to play in enhancing and facilitating the delivery of successful and sustainable neighbourhoods in South Dublin County in a manner which retains the distinctive identity of each area while also ensuring residents have access to a wide range of such facilities. These facilities should be accessible from residential areas by safe and convenient routes.



Policy QDP1: Successful and Sustainable Neighbourhoods

Support the development of successful and sustainable neighbourhoods that are connected to and provide for a range of local services and facilities.

QDP1 Objective 1:

To ensure that residential development contributes to the creation of sustainable communities in accordance with the requirements of the *Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas*, DEHLG (2009) (or any superseding document) including the urban design criteria as illustrated under the companion *Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide*, DEHLG (2009).

QDP1 Objective 2:
To ensure that residential, mixed use and employment development provides an integrated and balanced approach to movement, placemaking and streetscape design in accordance with the requirements of the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets, DTTAS and DEHLG (2013 as updated).

QDP1 Objective 3:
To protect the quality, ambiance, vibrancy and vitality of urban centres by promoting an appropriate mix of complementary and compatible day and night-time uses, including commercial, recreational, civic, cultural, leisure and residential uses.

QDP1 Objective 4:
To reinforce the network of urban centres as the appropriate locations for new mixed-use development, ensuring that the existing context including identified built and natural assets, urban design, integration and potential for connectivity fully informs development.



QDP1 Objective 5:
To promote the re-development of underutilised Local Centres within the County as new mixed use neighbourhood hubs continuing to provide for local retail and services in a manner which respects and consolidates the existing urban character of these areas ensuring adherence to the eight key design principles in 'The Plan Approach' including quality of design, integration, accessibility and connections to the surrounding areas.



QDP1 Objective 6:
To build residential neighbourhoods in a manner that aims to provide for adequate numbers of affordable homes in line with provisions set out in Goal 11 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy towards the delivery of long-term sustainable communities.

5.2.1 The Delivery of Sustainable Neighbourhoods 'The Plan Approach'

To deliver sustainable communities and a healthier and better quality of life for all in South Dublin County, this plan sets out eight key principles which must be applied to new developments in the County.

'The Plan Approach' to the delivery of sustainable and successful neighbourhoods is to ensure that all development is designed and developed around the eight principles so that every opportunity is harnessed to drive and support the vision for South Dublin County to create attractive, connected and functional places to live, work, visit, socialise and invest in.

The eight key principles apply on all zoned development lands within the County and to a multitude of development types and land uses. Development proposals – excluding smaller scale extensions which do not impact on the public realm – should be supported by a statement from a suitably qualified person detailing 'the plan approach' taken in the design of the development, including the materials and

finishes proposed and demonstrating how the overarching principles for the achievement of successful and sustainable neighbourhoods have been integrated as part of the design proposal.



Figure 1: Eight Key Design Principles

The overarching considerations / principles provide a holistic approach for development facilitated by each of the subsequent chapters in this plan and must be integrated in a manner which recognises and contributes positively towards successful and sustainable neighbourhoods.

Policy QDP2: Overarching - Successful and Sustainable Neighbourhoods

Promote the creation of successful and sustainable neighbourhoods through the application of the eight key design principles to ensure the delivery of attractive, connected, and well-functioning places to live, work, visit, socialise and invest in throughout the County.

QDP2 Objective 1:
To ensure that applications for new development are accompanied by a statement from a suitably qualified person detailing how 'The Plan Approach' has been taken into consideration and incorporated into the design of the development including the materials and finishes proposed and demonstrating how the overarching principles for the achievement of successful and sustainable neighbourhoods have been integrated as part of the design proposal.

QDP2 Objective 2:
To ensure that 'The Plan Approach' to development is taken into consideration by the applicant and demonstrated during any pre-application consultations (under section 247 of the Planning & Development Act, 2000, as amended).

5.2.2 Context

Context is the character and setting of the area in which a proposed development will be located. Context includes the natural as well as the human history of the area; the capacity of the receiving environment, the form of settlement, buildings and spaces; its ecology and archaeology; its landscape, its location, and the routes which pass through it. A thorough appreciation and assessment of the overall site context is the starting point in designing a distinct place.

South Dublin County has grown around the villages of Clondalkin, Lucan, Newcastle, Palmerstown, Rathcoole, Rathfarnham, Saggart, Tallaght and Templeogue. Each of the villages has a unique character and offers a diverse range of professional and retail services. Alongside this, new urban centres have developed over the years around the different residential areas. These local and district centres have become an important focus for the local community with their own identity providing a sense of place to these neighbourhoods.

In facilitating growth over the last two decades, Adamstown has been developed as a sustainable neighbourhood within a strategic growth area. Clonburris and Tallaght Town Centre alongside regeneration lands within the wider Tallaght Neighbourhood have been identified as areas capable of accommodating significant future growth over the lifetime of this and future plans. Further development potential exists within the City Edge regeneration lands which will be subject to a detailed framework for development in conjunction with Dublin City Council. Development has also occurred in areas where Local Area Plans are in place, providing a framework for development in those areas.

Key to delivering high quality design and healthy placemaking will be ensuring that all new development responds in a positive manner to its surroundings contributing significantly towards the overall aim of delivering successful and sustainable neighbourhoods within South Dublin County.

Policy QDP3: Neighbourhood Context
Support and facilitate proposals which contribute in a positive manner to the character and setting of an area.
QDP3 Objective 1: To ensure new development contributes in a positive manner to the character and setting of the immediate area in which a proposed development is located taking into consideration the provisions set out in Chapters 3 and 4 of this Plan and having regard to the requirements set out in Chapter 12: *Implementation and Monitoring* in relation to design statements.
QDP3 Objective 2: To protect and conserve the special character of the historic core of the villages and ensure that a full understanding of the archaeological, architectural, urban design and landscape heritage of each village informs the design approach to new development, infrastructure and renewal, recognising the particular character and context in Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs).
QDP3 Objective 3: To promote and adhere to design standards and densities in village centres that are informed by the surrounding village and historic context and enhance the specific characteristics of each town or village in terms of design, scale, form and external finishes.
QDP3 Objective 4: To protect and conserve the special character of the historic core of the traditional village of Palmerstown and ensure that a full understanding of the archaeological, architectural, urban design and landscape heritage of the village informs the design approach to new development and renewal, in particular in Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) and to provide more weight to this objective than to the policies of third parties and / or to provide that where third party policies are to be given priority, the implementation of such policies should identify how this CDP objective is being prioritised and accommodated in the implementation.
QDP3 Objective 5: To promote design standards and densities in the traditional village of Palmerstown, that are informed by the historic context and enhance the specific characteristics of the village in terms of design, scale and external finishes and to provide more weight to this objective than to the policies of third parties and / or to provide that where third party policies are to be given priority, the implementation of such policies should identify how this CDP objective is being prioritised and accommodated in the implementation.

QDP3 Objective 6:
To ensure that higher buildings in established areas respect the surrounding context and take account of heights and their impact on light and the negative impact that they may have on existing communities to ensure consistency with regard to Healthy Placemaking.

QDP3 Objective 7:
Any development on the RES-N lands (Killinarden and Ballycullen / Oldcourt) abutting the Rural Zone at Map 9 shall be designed, located, scaled and serviced in a manner that does not detract from the character and landscape of the receiving environment bearing in mind its proximity to the HA-DM zone.

QDP3 Objective 8:
To only consider buildings of a reasonable / appropriate height in our heritage villages and that this is in line with existing buildings and is sympathetic to the makeup of these heritage villages.

QDP3 Objective 9:
To preserve, incorporate, enhance and respond to the setting of existing archaeological and historic features including burgage plots and tower house sites where these arise.

5.2.3 Healthy Placemaking

Healthy placemaking seeks to protect and enhance the unique identity and character of places and to facilitate improvements to human wellbeing and the quality of life that comes from the interaction of people and their environment. Placemaking is underpinned by good urban design, which seeks to create public spaces that are vibrant, distinctive, safe, and accessible and which promote and facilitate social interaction. Healthy placemaking requires the delivery of the eight key principles in a holistic manner improving both social and physical infrastructure.

The provision of high quality and inclusive urban design measures are key to the delivery of successful and sustainable neighbourhoods within South Dublin County creating healthy, attractive and accessible places to live, work, visit, socialise and invest in.

Policy QDP4: Healthy Placemaking
Promote the delivery of neighbourhoods that are attractive, connected, vibrant and well-functioning places to live, work, visit, socialise and invest in.
QDP4 Objective 1: To deliver successful and sustainable neighbourhoods that are attractive, connected, vibrant and well-functioning through high quality design and healthy placemaking in a manner which reduces the need to travel, facilitates a mix of uses and the efficient use of land and infrastructure in line with the provisions of NPO 4 and 26 of the NPF and RPO's 6.12, 9.10 and 9.11 of the RSES.
QDP4 Objective 2: To promote a high standard of building and urban design, creating public spaces that are distinctive, safe, universally accessible and facilitate social and cultural diversity and interaction.

5.2.4 Connected Neighbourhoods (Short Distance Neighbourhoods)

Delivering successful and sustainable neighbourhoods means providing for people to have access insofar as possible to the daily services they need by means of walking and cycling. This is promoted in the RSES through the 10-minute settlement concept whereby community facilities and services are accessible within a 10-minute walk or cycle from home or accessible via public transport services connecting people to larger scaled settlements where such services are available.

A key element of healthy placemaking is the need to ensure alternatives to the car in the design of streets and public spaces and to prioritise and promote cycling and walking as active transport modes. The provision of high-quality public transport, greenways and cycleways enhances an area, contributing to more attractive places, creating opportunities for a healthier lifestyle through physical activity and reducing the negative consequences of car-based commuting.

This County Development Plan aims to strive towards the delivery of connected neighbourhoods and the 10-minute settlement concept through the promotion of a compact settlement form and sustainable movement (see also Chapters 2 and 7 of this Plan).

In support of this approach the *Cycle South Dublin* programme of works reflects the increasing importance of making cycling and walking realistic and integral parts of how people move around the County. *Cycle South Dublin* has been prepared against the backdrop of the Council's commitments to Sustainable Travel; Climate Change; Building Stronger Local Economies and Improving Personal Health and Wellbeing. The Development Plan supports this programme and aims to optimise such infrastructural investments through the promotion of connected neighbourhoods and sustainable movement. The detailed implementation of such measures will be carried out through this plan and various statutory and framework plans as required.

Policy QDP5: Connected Neighbourhoods
Promote short distance neighbourhoods and strive towards the achievement of 10-minute settlements over the lifetime of the Plan, promoting a more compact development form, sustainable movement, and ease of access to services, community facilities, jobs and amenities.
QDP5 Objective 1: To improve the accessibility of all identified centres (see Chapter 9 Table 9.2) from the surrounding catchment area through public transport provision, sustainable transport infrastructure including cycling and walking, incorporating high quality local linkages between public transport stops, cycle parking and car park facilities and the various attractions within each identified centre (see Chapter 7: *Sustainable Movement* and Appendix 12: *Our Neighbourhoods* for further details).
QDP5 Objective 2: To promote measures to improve pedestrian and cycle safety and convenience, including new or enhanced permeability links within all areas and pedestrianisation within identified centres.

5.2.5 Public Realm

Key to the achievement of successful and sustainable neighbourhoods is the provision of a high-quality public realm. Public Realm refers generally to the public space of a neighbourhood area, the areas between buildings, the streets, squares and parks. Public space primarily facilitates a rich public life providing opportunities for different users to enjoy an area in a multitude of ways.

How effectively and efficiently the public realm works is a vital component of the day-to-day life and experience within a neighbourhood and local area. In addition to providing for human interaction, it provides the essential space for key services such as lighting, signage, cleaning and drainage, and is the space in which all forms of movement and transportation operate. For this reason, safety, orientation and accessibility are important issues to consider when looking at the public realm. Such public spaces should feel comfortable, safe and welcoming.

As a minimum, safe and secure public spaces should be:

- **Welcoming and Inviting:** Public spaces should be designed and constructed with all members of the community in mind. Public spaces that are attractive, feel safe and are easy to access encourages people from different ages and backgrounds to be more physically active in outdoor spaces;
- **Well-lit:** Particular consideration should be given to how spaces are experienced at night and how the design can improve this experience. As well as boosting safety, lighting can influence the flow of movement, as pedestrians will favour following a path of light over risking the darker pathways;
- **Well Designed:** Public spaces should be attractive, with a distinct sense of place and high-quality public realm. Good-quality local greenery such as tree and shrub

planting, small urban and pocket parks, playgrounds, and urban meadows, improve the look, feel and ambience of a space;

- **Well Connected:** Public spaces which form part of the wider network of safe and appealing routes for walking and cycling can ensure day and night-time use with people traversing the space regularly to walk or cycle to local shops, schools and workplaces, or to access public transport links;
- **Well-maintained:** Public spaces should always have a well-maintained appearance. The full life-time costs of materials, including maintenance and replacement, needs to be properly identified at design and selection stage and resourced in practice.

A primary aim of this plan is to promote the provision of a high-quality public realm identifying the need for the enhancement of existing and provision of new additional civic and public spaces and parks, through a hierarchy of spaces (See Chapter 8, Section 8.7.2). The enhancement of existing and delivery of such new spaces while providing for attractive, interesting, inviting and well used outdoor spaces will also aim to maximise the potential to provide for a connected network of natural green spaces identified within the Green Infrastructure Network (Chapter 4) of this plan.

Policy QDP6: Public Realm
Promote a multi-disciplinary and co-ordinated approach to the delivery and management of the public realm within South Dublin County.
QDP6 Objective 1: To require that all development proposals, whether in established areas or in new growth nodes, contribute positively to the creation of new, and the enhancement of existing public realm. To demonstrate how the highest quality in public realm design is achieved and how it can be robustly maintained over time (see also Chapter 12: *Implementation and Monitoring* - Design Statements and Public Realm).
QDP6 Objective 2: To support public realm improvements under South Dublin County Council's Village and Centre enhancement initiatives including those proposed within Architectural Conservation Areas having regard to the *Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DAHG, 2011) or any subsequent guidelines.
QDP6 Objective 3: To promote and implement environmental and public realm improvements in existing town, village, district and local centres to a high standard and finish to ensure that the design addresses environmental quality, urban design, safety including the potential for anti-social behaviour, identity, and image.
QDP6 Objective 4: To pursue all avenues of funding to secure resources for the enhancement, renewal and regeneration of the public realm of the County's urban areas.

QDP6 Objective 5:
To co-ordinate the development of the private and public space in Palmerstown Village and other villages by ensuring that any project works by third parties are used as an opportunity for SDCC to improve and enhance the streetscape and that SDCC liaise with utility providers so that all unnecessary footpath poles are removed and all electrical and other overhead cables, currently a blight on the village landscape, are put underground at the earliest opportunity.

QDP6 Objective 6:
To ensure that all new developments but particularly apartment developments where gardens do not form part of the home, make provision for sufficient public realm space to enable the community to enjoy a healthy living environment outdoors but within the boundaries of the development and that no new development whether it be private or social creates a development that downgrades the public realm to an extent that it is insufficient to serve as a healthy place to live, both mentally and physically.

QDP6 Objective 7:
To ensure, in so far as is practical, that all boundary walls in new residential developments are of a similar height and of a high quality where they are bordered on either side by a public footpath or an area that has been or is due to be taken-in-charge in order to leverage the opportunity to improve the quality of boundary treatments.

QDP6 Objective 8:
To continue to improve the environment and public realm of Palmerstown village in terms of environmental quality, urban design, safety, identity and image.

QDP6 Objective 9:
To ensure, in cooperation with the NTA and relevant agencies, that projects which affect the public realm will consider fully the needs of pedestrian, cyclists and public transport users, and that transport schemes complement any public realm objectives.

5.2.6 High Quality and Inclusive Development

Guidelines for Planning Authorities in relation to residential development advocate a holistic approach to the creation of sustainable communities and residential neighbourhoods, with an emphasis on the design of quality urban environments.

The Guidelines on *Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities,* DEHLG (2007) advise that successful design and good quality sustainable housing developments require a balance between a range of issues such as accessibility, security, safety, privacy, community interaction, availability of appropriate services and the provision of adequate space.

The Guidelines for Planning Authorities on *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas,* DEHLG (2009) set out urban design criteria that should be used in the

design of all residential areas. Best practice examples of the implementation of these urban design criteria are illustrated under the companion *Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide,* DEHLG (2009).

The Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets, DTTAS & DECLG (2013) provides further guidance in relation to the design of streets and presents a series of principles, approaches and standards that are necessary to create safe and successful residential streets.

Further to the aforementioned guidelines, design criteria and standards in relation to Healthy Placemaking and Public Realm for all development types are detailed in Chapter 12: *Implementation and Monitoring* of this Plan. The standards are framed by the policy and objectives set out below.

High Quality Design

A high standard of design can significantly improve the aesthetic and practical experience of our neighbourhoods in everyday life. A high quality of urban design and architecture also improves economic value and is a key element in regeneration proposals. The Council will therefore encourage high quality design, materials and finishes and good quality landscaping with robust maintenance protocols for all residential, commercial and employment developments in South Dublin County including retail and mixed-use schemes. The design must ensure that the proposed development will be integrated with and be complementary to the streetscape. All proposals for new development must demonstrate how the proposal constitutes a positive urban design response to the local context, leveraging improvements to the local standards where required, and how it contributes to healthy placemaking and the identity of an area.

Policy QDP7: High Quality Design – Development General

Promote and facilitate development which incorporates exemplary standards of high-quality, sustainable and inclusive urban design, urban form and architecture.

QDP7 Objective 1:

To actively promote high quality design through the policies and objectives which form 'The Plan Approach' to creating sustainable and successful neighbourhoods and through the implementation of South Dublin County's Building Height and Density Guide.

Street Frontage

Promoting well-designed streets and public spaces that feel safe, secure and attractive for all to use is an important element in creating healthy places to live, work, visit, socialise and invest in. Successful streets and spaces are generally characterised by the presence of active frontages or 'live' edges. Buildings or other features whose use is directly accessible from the public street or space which it faces, such as shopfronts, doors and entrances, or residential upper floors with overlooking windows, provide activity and vitality within the public realm with people coming and going at different times of the day, providing natural surveillance and vibrancy.

Active frontages which meet these criteria will be encouraged in all town, district and local centres, while inactive or poorly designed frontages will be discouraged.

Shopfronts, workspace, residential and community spaces form the backdrop to many of the pedestrian areas and spaces that make up the public realm. They have an importance well beyond their role to advertise the goods available for purchase. Shopfronts – the scope of which encompasses not only shops but also other business frontages such as restaurants, public houses, banks and offices – provide important opportunities to engage with the street. Similarly, street front cafes are an important part of our urban centre environments and add to the vibrancy and vitality of the streetscape.



The Council will actively promote the principles of good shopfront design as set out in *South Dublin County Council Shopfront Design Guidelines* (2019) and continue to support the improvement of shopfronts through initiatives such as the South Dublin County Council Shopfront Grant Scheme.

Policy QDP7: High Quality Design – Street Frontage
QDP7 Objective 2: To actively promote well-designed streets and public spaces that provide for active frontages and 'live' edges that feel safe, secure and attractive for all to use.
QDP7 Objective 3: To require a high quality of design and finish for new and replacement shopfronts, signage, and advertising, having regard to the requirements set out in Chapter 12: *Implementation and Monitoring*.

QDP7 Objective 4:
To ensure that the principles of good shopfront design as set out in South Dublin County Council Shopfront Design Guidelines (2019) (or any superseding guidelines) are adhered to.

Street Width and Building Height Ratios

As part of assessing new development proposals, building height and the enclosure of new streets and public spaces will be an important consideration.

Building heights that result in a canyon effect of the street will be discouraged and this will need to be tested and demonstrated as part of proposals. Canyons can inhibit sufficient light and air reaching the buildings and street below. Consideration may be given to those streets with a north-to-south orientation where they allow more sunlight to permeate than streets with an east-to-west axis.

Along narrower streets, it may be necessary to keep the scale of the frontage of the building to a minimum, by setting back the upper floors behind the front roof parapet so that it is not apparent from the street. Such a solution will also need to work in terms of its impact from longer views where it may be more visible.

Designers should seek to promote / maintain a sense of enclosure on all streets within Towns and Villages. Figure 3 demonstrates measurements that can indicate a sense of enclosure by way of building height to street width ratio. Where building frontages face onto public open spaces and squares, they should normally provide sufficient sense of enclosure and a suitable backdrop to define and overlook the space while not overpowering it.

Ultimately, all proposals for development should contribute positively to providing a coherent enclosure of streets and public spaces, taking into consideration the proportions and activities of buildings on both sides of a street or surrounding a public space.

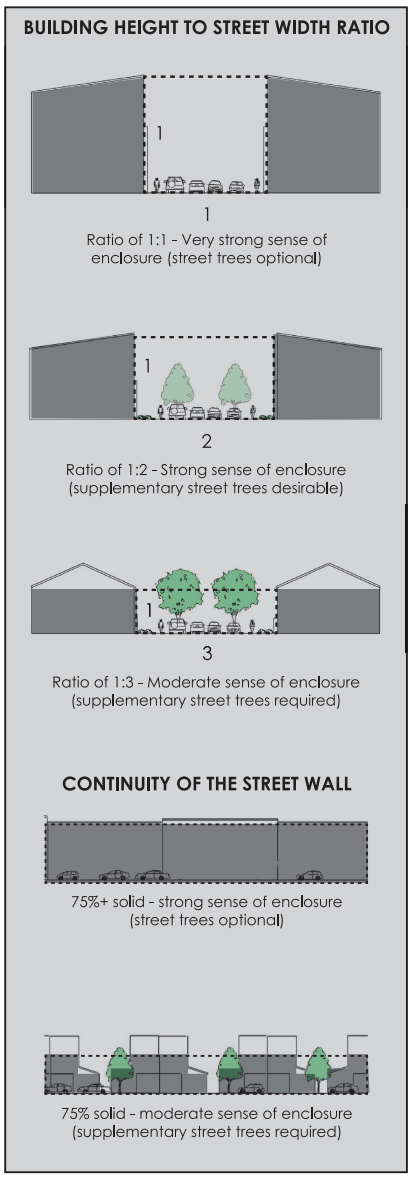


Figure 3: Building Height to Street Width Ratio - DMURS 2019.

Policy QDP7: High Quality Design – Street Width and Height
QDP7 Objective 5: To ensure that development contributes to the creation of sustainable communities in accordance with the requirements of the Guidelines on *Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities,* DEHLG (2007), the *Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas*, DEHLG (2009), or any superseding guidelines, including the urban design criteria as illustrated under the companion *Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide*, DEHLG (2009).
QDP7 Objective 6: To ensure that development provides an integrated and balanced approach to movement, healthy placemaking and streetscape design in accordance with the requirements of the *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets*, DTTAS and DEHLG (2019).
QDP7 Objective 7: To ensure that all proposals for development contribute positively to providing a coherent enclosure of streets and public spaces, taking into consideration the proportions and activities of buildings on both sides of a street or surrounding a public space, providing for good standards of daylight and sunlight, and micro climatic conditions and having regard to the guidance and principles set out in the South Dublin County's Building Height and Density Guide and the *Design Manual for Urban Streets and Roads* (DMURS) (2019).

Adaptability and Inclusivity

High quality, adaptable and inclusive development, which meets the needs of all users, regardless of age, gender, race or sensory and mobility abilities and disabilities and allows all people to use spaces in the same way and on equal terms, must be at the forefront of all new development proposals. The Council will promote and support a Universal Design Approach to residential and non-residential development including employment, education, civic, community and health facilities, retail, banking and other tertiary services. The application of Universal Design thinking to our built environment recognises differences and accommodates them by integrating considerations at the start of the design stage:

- → **Equitable use:** The design is useful to people with diverse abilities;
- → **Flexibility in use:** The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities;
- → **Ease of use:** Use of the design is easy to understand and can be used efficiently and comfortably.

Quality housing with long-term adaptability – such as 'soft-spots' where internal walls can change from a two-bedroom layout to one larger bedroom; and WCs that are wheelchair accessible, with drainage and service provisions enabling a shower to be fitted at a later stage – allows for change as circumstances alter or families grow. The Council will promote and support adaptable building design and the provision of Lifetime Homes in residential and mixed-use developments, having regard to the

principles and guidance on adaptability as set out in the South Dublin County's Height and Density Guide (Appendix 10) and the *Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide* (2009) and the guidance on Lifetime Homes as set out in the *Quality Housing and Sustainable Communities – Best Practice Guidelines for Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities* (2007).

The Development Plan includes a socially inclusive housing strategy for the existing and future population of South Dublin County including the needs of those requiring social housing. The following Chapters set out the Council's holistic approach to neighbourhood and community development, which aims to deliver attractive mixed-use sustainable neighbourhoods containing a variety of housing types and tenures together with supporting community facilities, public realm and good connections to public transport links and local amenities and services.

Policy QDP7: High Quality Design – Adaptability and Inclusivity

QDP7 Objective 8:
To promote and support a Universal Design Approach to residential and non-residential development – having regard in particular to the universal design principles and guidance in relation to Buildings for Everyone, Housing and Shared Space as promoted by the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design at the National Disability Authority – ensuring that all environments are inclusive and can be used to the fullest extent possible by all users regardless of age, ability or disability consistent with RPO 9.12 and 9.13 of the RSES. (See also Chapter 8: *Community Infrastructure and Open Space*).

QDP7 Objective 9:
To promote and support the provision of quality housing with long-term adaptability in residential and mixed-use developments, having regard to the principles and guidance in relation to adaptability as set out in South Dublin County's Height and Density Guide (Appendix 10) and the *Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide* (2009) and the guidance on Lifetime Homes as set out in the *Quality Housing and Sustainable Communities – Best Practice Guidelines for Delivering Homes Sustaining Communities* (2007).

QDP7 Objective 10:
To promote and support the principles of universal design, ensuring that all environments are inclusive and can be used to the fullest extent possible by users regardless of age, ability or disability consistent with RPO 9.12 and 9.13 of the RSES.

QDP7 Objective 11:
To encourage and foster the creation of attractive mixed-use sustainable neighbourhoods which contain a variety of housing types and tenures with supporting community facilities, public realm and residential amenities, and which are socially mixed in order to achieve a socially inclusive county.

QDP7 Objective 12:
To develop a network of pedestrian footpaths and public spaces, which includes access to public toilets, accessible outdoor seating and facilities for people with disabilities and / or mobility impairments and based on the principles of universal design.

5.2.7 Density and Building Heights

The adoption of the *National Planning Framework* (NPF) represented the advent of significant changes to planning policy in Ireland at national and regional level. The NPF articulates a set of shared goals for every community across the country to deliver a programme of compact urban growth.

National Policy Objective 22 of the Revised NPF requires the inclusion of planning policy provisions and standards *'including in particular building height and car parking to be based on performance criteria that seek to achieve well-designed high-quality outcomes in order to achieve targeted growth'.*

Residential Density

The Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines (2024) set policy and guidance in relation to residential density, including provision of ranges, expressed as 'dwellings per hectare' (dph), in various settlement categories and different area types within those settlements. The area types and the recommended net density ranges relevant to South Dublin County are outlined in Table 3.1 and 3.3 of the Guidelines. Section 3.4 of the Guidelines provide that the recommended density ranges should be further refined based on:

- consideration of centrality and accessibility to services and public transport; and
- considerations of character, amenity and the natural environment.

The applicable density ranges in a South Dublin County context are outlined here in Table 5.1 and are aligned with the *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines (2024)*. In relation to "Metropolitan Towns", the centres of the settlements of Newcastle, Rathcoole and Saggart do not meet the characteristics of the "Metropolitan Towns (>1,500 population) – Centre and Urban Neighbourhoods" area type in the Guidelines as they are historic villages where the zoning is intended tosupport the protection and conservation of the special character of the traditional villages. The "Metropolitan Towns (>1,500 population) - Suburban / Urban Extension" area type and density range are appropriate for the entirety of these settlements, including the centres.

Table 5.1 Appropriate density ranges as per the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements - Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024)

Settlement Category	Area Type and Description	Density Range (Net)	Applicable Areas within SDCC
Dublin City and Suburbs	**City – Urban Neighbourhoods** The city urban neighbourhoods category includes: i. the compact medium density residential neighbourhoods around the city centre that have evolved overtime to include a greater range of land uses, ii. strategic and sustainable development locations, iii. town centres designated in a statutory development plan, and iv. lands around existing or planned high-capacity public transport nodes or interchanges[1]. -all within the city and suburbs area. These are highly accessible urban locations with good access to employment, education and institutional uses and public transport.	50-250 dph shall generally be applied.	'Regen', 'TC', 'MRC' and 'SDZ' zoned lands, subject to statutory plans / schemes. The existing statutory plans for these areas, and forthcoming for City Edge, further refine densities within those areas on a plan-led basis based on considerations of centrality and accessibility to services and public transport, character, amenity and the natural environment.

1 Defined in Table 3.8 of the 'Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlement Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024)'

	City – Suburban/Urban Extension Suburban areas are the lower density car-orientated residential suburbs constructed at the edge of cities in the latter half of the 20th and early 21st century, while urban extension refers to the greenfield lands at the edge of the existing built-up footprint that are zoned for residential or mixed-use (including residential) development.	40-80 dph shall generally be applied. Densities of up to 150 dph shall be open for consideration at 'accessible' suburban / urban extension locations.	All other areas within or directly contiguous to the Dublin City and Suburbs boundary not covered by the 'City – Urban Neighbourhood' area type.
Metropolitan Towns and Villages (>1,500 population)	**Suburban/Urban Extension** Suburban areas are the low density car-orientated residential areas constructed at the edge of the town, while urban extension refers to greenfield lands at the edge of the existing built-up footprint that are zoned for residential or mixed-use (including residential) development.	35-50 dph shall generally be applied. Densities of up to 100 dph shall be open for consideration at 'accessible' suburban / urban extension locations.	'VC', 'Res' and 'Res-N' zoned lands within or directly contiguous to the settlement boundaries of Newcastle, Rathcoole and Saggart.

Section 3.3.6 of the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements - Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2024) identifies exceptions to the recommended density ranges.

Plot Ratio and Mixed-use Density

Dwellings per hectare (dph) is generally a useful tool for measurement of intensity of land-use in primarily residential developments. In mixed-use town centre and regeneration areas where a range of uses are encouraged, both within the area and within individual development sites, plot ratio can be a more effective measurement of intensity of use, scale of buildings and urban design outcomes. It provides flexibility to measure a range of housing options and non-residential uses.

Tallaght Town Centre LAP area and City Edge are two such high-density regeneration areas within South Dublin where the current plan/framework uses plot ratio as the primary measurement of density. This approach assists in ensuring that development achieves the urban design outcomes for the scale of building, public realm, streets and mix of uses envisaged in these areas suitable to the emerging character of the area; that there is flexibility to accommodate a mix of uses; and that infrastructure/

services can be planned for the anticipated quantum of workers, as well as residents, based on floor area targets.

Building Height

The *Urban Development and Building Height Guidelines* (2018) expand on the requirements of the NPF by setting relevant planning criteria for considering increased building height to achieve greater densities in various but principally urban city-centre locations and suburban and wider town locations. To ensure compliance at local level with the overarching planning policy requirements at national level, SPPR1 states:

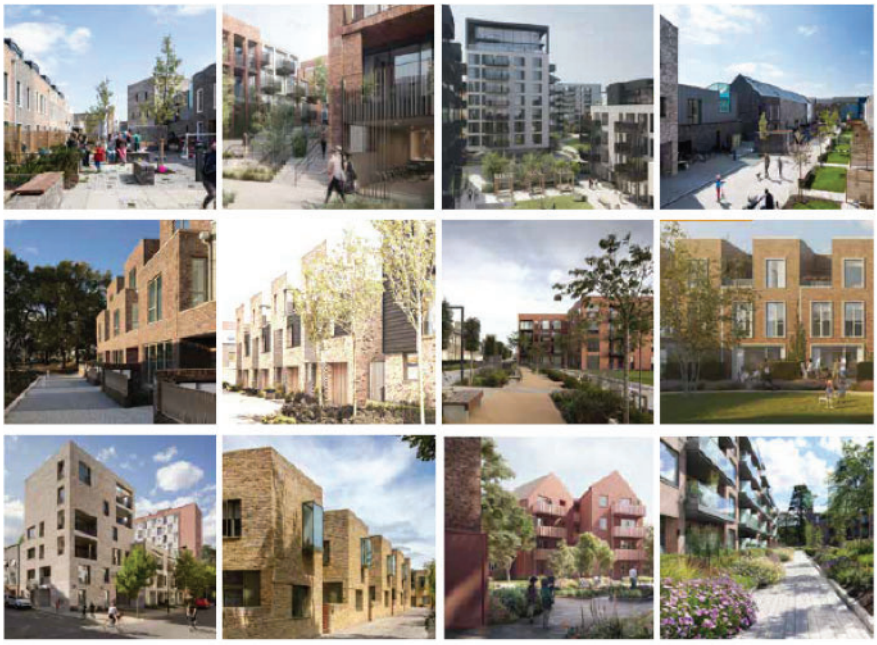
"In accordance with Government policy to support increased building height and density in locations with good public transport accessibility, particularly town / city cores, planning authorities shall explicitly identify, through their statutory plans, areas where increased building height will be actively pursued for both redevelopment, regeneration and infill development to secure the objectives of the National Planning Framework and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies and shall not provide for blanket numerical limitations on building height."

In response to such policy provisions and guidelines, in particular SPPR1, this plan is accompanied by South Dublin County's Building Height and Density Guide (Appendix 10).

South Dublin County's Building Height and Density Guide (BHDG)

The *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines* (2024) and the Building Height and Density Guide (BHDG) for South Dublin County form the primary policy basis and toolkits to employ the delivery of increased building height and density within the County in a proactive but considered manner.

South Dublin's Building Height and Density Guide contains a detailed set of performance-based criteria for the assessment of developments of greater density and increased height. It provides a series of detailed notional development scenarios for various site contexts providing for specific guidance criteria around contextual appropriateness. These have been developed especially for South Dublin County based on the known qualities and characteristics of its particular urban and suburban environments. The performance-based assessment criteria will enable proper consideration of development proposals for increased building height linked to the achievement of a greater density of development.



The BHDG has regard to and is informed by all relevant Ministerial Guidance documents (and any amendments thereof) and Specific Planning Policy Requirements contained therein, most notably the *Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2018). The premise of these guidelines is not intended to introduce height for the sake of height, but to introduce and consider increased heights and densities as a means of accommodating greater residential populations within the County's serviced and zoned land banks in particular where public transport, employment and other services are proximate to a development proposal in line with the principals of compact growth.

Securing compact and sustainable urban growth in South Dublin County will mean focusing on reusing previously developed 'brownfield' land in the County as well as undeveloped infill sites, particularly those served by good public transport. The BHDG sets out the key considerations in scenarios such as this and other relevant varying site contexts across the County.

How to use the BHDG

South Dublin County's Building Height and Density Guide aims to take applicants through a process of contextual analysis by which the suitability or otherwise of different density and height levels can be assessed with reference to the receiving environment of the proposed development.

The guide sets out the following 4-step approach which includes;

1. Policy	2. Thinking	3. Application	4. Illustration
Planning Context National and Local	Understanding Considerations around Density and Height	Developing a Criteria-based Approach	Indicative Development Scenarios

The BHDG in Appendix 10 of this plan is intended to complement the *Urban Design Manual – Best Practice Guidelines* (2009) which identified a set of component questions at various scales which together formed a complete urban design analysis of the development proposal. In the BHDG, certain parameters of the more general urban design assessment are expanded to more directly address issues relating to height, density, and intensification.

Policy QDP8: High Quality Design – Building Height and Density Guide (BHDG)

Adhere to the requirements set out in the Urban Development and Building Height Guidelines (2018) issued by the DHLGH through the implementation of the Assessment Toolkit set out in the South Dublin County's Building Heights and Density Guide 2021 and taking due account of the requirements set out in the *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines* (2024).

QDP8 Objective 1:

To assess development proposals in accordance with the Building Height and Density Guide set out in Appendix 10 of this Development Plan and associated planning guidelines. In this regard, all medium to large scale and complex planning applications (30 + residential units, commercial development over 1,000 sq m or as otherwise required by the Planning Authority) shall be accompanied by a 'Design Statement'. The Design Statement shall include, inter alia, a detailed analysis of the proposal and statement based on the guidance, principles and performance-based design criteria set out in South Dublin County's Height and Density Guide. Any departures within the proposed development from the guidance set out in the Building Height and Density Guide for South Dublin County (Appendix 10) shall be clearly highlighted in the Design Statement. (See Chapter 12: *Implementation and Monitoring*).

QDP8 Objective 2:

In accordance with NPO35, SPPR1 and SPPR3, to proactively consider increased building heights on lands zoned Regeneration (Regen), Major Retail Centre (MRC), District Centre (DC), Local Centre (LC), Town Centre (TC) and New Residential (Res-N) and on sites demonstrated as having the capacity to accommodate increased densities in line with the locational criteria of the *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines* (2024) and *Planning Design Standards for Apartments – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2025) (or Planning Design Standards for Apartments National Planning Statement, as applicable) and the *Urban Design Manual – Best Practice Guidelines* (2009), where it is clearly demonstrated by means of an urban design analysis carried out in accordance with the provisions of South Dublin County's Building Height and Density Guide that it is contextually appropriate to do so.

Building Height Terminology

South Dublin County's BHDG sets out important terminology to assist in the assessment of building heights in the County and discussions around height. Recognising that there should be no blanket numerical limitations on building heights, height in the BHDG is considered thematically in relation to its context. Such terminology is summarised as follows:

Prevailing Height	The prevailing building height is the most commonly occurring height of buildings within an area of common character and at the contextual scale at which the proposal is to be assessed. The prevailing building height of a specific street may be different to the prevailing building height of the wider neighbourhood and a site might in some instances be large enough to effect a transition between the two.	
Thematic Height	In certain urban areas, for example Georgian Dublin, the prevailing height may be closely linked to a specific form of development from which the area derives its character. In such instances, it might be appropriate to refer to Prevailing Height as Thematic Height in order to signal the presence of specific contextual issues around built environment, heritage or historic concerns.	

Amplified Heights	There may be existing buildings or parts of buildings within the streetscape or neighbourhood that deviate from the prevailing height but not to such an extent as to be considered a significant, or non-thematic, variation. Such instances of amplified height do not necessarily denote a contextual precedent to which new developments can respond in kind with increased heights.	
Apparent Height	There may be existing buildings or parts of buildings within the streetscape or neighbourhood that deviate from the prevailing height. This may be in a more comprehensive fashion than selective amplification of part of the building's form by instead setting back floors above the prevailing or thematic height as a secondary massing, while the primary building façade provides a 'shoulder' that maintains the prevailing height of the street.	
Contextual Heights	While the prevailing height is the general measure of heights in the surrounding area, the analysis of contextual height will include and identify all of the variations in apparent height and amplified heights that are relevant to any rationale for or justification of increased building heights in a new development. A comprehensive analysis of prevailing and thematic heights and the function and location of variations to these within the urban area will result in an understanding of the contextual height of the receiving environment of the proposed development.	

Context Driven Approach to Height

The approach to building heights in South Dublin County, as supported by South Dublin County's BHDG, will be driven by its context. This is in line with the Urban Development and Building Height Guidelines and specifically SPPR1 which prohibits numerical limitations on building height by planning authorities.

The BHDG sets out a framework for the analysis of building heights relative to their context. For example, a ten-storey building is 'tall' in the context of a 2-storey streetscape but is only 'taller' in a block where the prevailing height is 8-storeys. Building heights are increased relative to the prevailing heights in their vicinity. Therefore, proposals for increased building heights can be expressed in terms of their amplification of prevailing heights by means of a Contextual Height Ratio. In this regard, a ten-storey building would be five times the contextual height (5 x CH) in a two-storey streetscape, but one and a quarter times the contextual height (1.25 x CH) in an 8-storey streetscape. Such a measure provides a clear indication of the scale of change proposed in the built environment without utilising the more subjective terminology of tall / taller or high / higher buildings.

The context driven approach to height in the County will be based on and informed by the receiving environment and surrounding built form having regard to the provisions of South Dublin County's BHDG and in particular the Contextual Analysis Toolkit. The presence of permitted development(s) in the surrounds, whilst a planning consideration, does not on its own, connote an emerging context of increased heights or a precedent for individual increases of development heights.



Contextual Heights at Clancy Quay Dublin - the 8-storey Building C can be expressed as a contextual height ratio of 4xCH relative to the historic buildings A or 1.25xCH relative to the newer development at Building B.

Proposed increased heights should be proportionate to the role and function of buildings and the scale of their impact on the receiving environment. By this measure, the more prominent a role the development plays at the larger urban scale the more a larger contextual height ratio would be expected; conversely the more locally-oriented a role the building plays the lower the expected contextual height ratio.

Landmark Buildings

Commonly, terms such as 'landmark' or 'gateway' are used in applications to justify significantly scaled increases in building heights. However, landmark buildings that are distinctive in their form and provide real legibility such as signalling the presence of an important public transport interchange or node; an important gateway to an urban area or a large-scale public or civic amenity or facility – can play an important role in healthy placemaking and creating successful and sustainable neighbourhood areas.

The scale of the landmark should be proportionate to its role as a placemaking object within the urban fabric and the extent to which that landmark function extends beyond the local area. The *Urban Development and Building Height Planning Guidelines* (DHLGH, 2018) provides the following classifications for landmarks:

- Metropolitan Landmarks, that is, landmarks with a function at the scale of the relevant City / Town;
- District Landmarks, that is, landmarks with a function at the level of the District / Neighbourhood / Street; and
- Local Landmarks, that is, landmarks with a function at the level of the Site / Building.

There is potential for misunderstanding around the designation of Metropolitan Landmark within the South Dublin County Council administrative area given the entire County is located within the wider Metropolitan Area of Dublin as set out in the RSES. As such, for the purposes of discussing proposals for proportionate increases in building height relative to the scale of the landmark, this Development Plan and South Dublin County's BHDG, instead uses the following classifications:

Primary Landmarks

Primary Landmarks are landmarks with a function at the scale of the urban centre.



An example would include the general increase in building heights in Tallaght Town Centre to signal the civic function and the specific increase in building height of the south-west block in the Belgard Square West development to mark the location of the Luas terminus.

Height increases in the primary landmark example did not preclude an increase in building height within the development block between Cookstown Way and Belgard Square West south of the civic centre. The vertical expression of the increase in building height serves a function at the urban scale to identify the town centre area from the N81 to the south.

Secondary Landmarks

Secondary landmarks are landmarks with a function at the neighbourhood scale.

An example would include the amplification of height and vertical expression of the mixed-use building on Adamstown Avenue signalling the gateway to the new neighbourhood.



The gateway nature of the site justifies a secondary landmark at the neighbourhood scale.

However, the extent of height increase is limited and setback from the primary massing along the Adamstown Avenue streetscape. The gateway function is primarily achieved by means of the vertical expression of a limited articulation of height.

Local Marker

Local landmarks are landmarks with a placemaking function within a streetscape or development area.



An example would be the expression of the tower form in the Carnegie Library on Monastery Road Clondalkin to signal the public function of the building.

The height of the tower element is no different to the general building height of the library. The local marker function has been achieved by articulation of secondary mass from the main building and its distinct vertical expression.

It follows from the above that not all increases in building heights will connote landmarks and that not all landmarks will justify an increase in building heights. Therefore, in applications for landmark type buildings or for amplified heights akin to a landmark, the onus will be on designers and applicants to satisfactorily demonstrate that the proposal is contextually appropriate but also that the proportionate function of the landmark justifies it, having regard to the sample primary, secondary and local landmark classifications set out above.

Policy QDP9: High Quality Design - Building Height and Density

Apply a context driven approach to building heights in South Dublin, as supported by South Dublin's Building Heights and Density Guide.

QDP9 Objective 1:
To require that designers and applicants demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority that applications for landmark type buildings or for amplified heights akin to a landmark, are contextually appropriate and that the proportionate function of the landmark justifies it, having regard to the primary, secondary and local landmark classifications.

5.2.8 Mix of Dwelling Types

This Plan sets out to ensure that new residential development provides a wide variety of housing types that cater for the diverse housing needs of the County's population and counteract segregation between differing household types. This is supported by the South Dublin County Council Housing Strategy 2022-2028 and the policies set out in Chapter 6, which recognise the need to provide a range of house types in all residential developments. The need for house types to cater for different demographics including aging will be important as indicated in the government's 'Our Shared Future' and will be influenced by the *South Dublin Age Friendly County Strategy* 2020-2024 *and Age Friendly Ireland's Principles and Guidelines for the Planning Authority* (2021).

Policy QDP10: Mix of Dwelling Types

Ensure that a wide variety of housing types, sizes and tenures are provided in the County in accordance with the provisions of the South Dublin County Council Housing Strategy 2022-2028.

QDP10 Objective 1:
To ensure that all new residential developments provide for a wide variety of housing types, sizes and tenures in line with the South Dublin County Housing Strategy 2022-2028.

QDP10 Objective 2:
To ensure that our ageing society is catered for in a choice of housing provision having regard to *South Dublin Age Friendly County Strategy and Age Friendly Ireland's Principle and Guidelines for the Planning Authority* (2021).

5.2.9 Materials, Colours and Textures

The careful selection of appropriate materials in buildings, streets and spaces is a key factor to achieving the qualities of successful places. Building finishes should be durable and of a high quality and should adhere to the principles of sustainability and energy efficiency. Durable materials such as stone, brick, timber, metal and glass will be promoted which provide either a traditional or contemporary aesthetic depending on design and application.

Each development proposal will be considered on its merits and the context of both the immediate and wider area are crucial when developing ideas about material choices, colours and detailing. In all types of development, it is important to consider whether the proposed materials, their colour and detailing contribute to the immediate context and reinforce a neighbourhood's 'sense of place'. Due to the unprecedented range and availability of standard building and cladding materials, choices have to be made using many criteria including:

- Appropriateness to building function;
- Robustness, durability and ease of maintenance;
- Thermal / Insulation performance;
- Sourcing: local, regional, or international;
- Life cycle costs;
- Contextual appropriateness;
- The need for quality design and placemaking.

Traditional materials may not be appropriate or available and therefore judgement has to be exercised regarding the characteristics of a new material to be complementary with the established pattern, rather than be poor imitations in terms of colour or texture.

Consideration should be given to long term maintenance implications of certain types of render, and weather resistant renders such as sand-cement, lime and pebble dash should be favoured. Rendered finishes down to ground level may not offer the robustness needed due to the higher level of activity and effects of weathering at this threshold.

Further guidance and performance-based assessment criteria in relation to the materials and detailing in new development proposals is set out in South Dublin County's BHDG (Appendix 10). Chapter 12 also sets out the Council's design principles and requirements in relation to the use of materials, colours and textures in development.

Policy QDP11: Materials, Colours and Textures
Promote high-quality building finishes that are appropriate to context, durable and adhere to the principles of sustainability and energy efficiency.
QDP11 Objective 1: To require the use of high quality and durable materials and finishes that make a positive contribution to placemaking.
QDP11 Objective 2: To promote the use of structural materials that have low to zero embodied energy and CO2 emissions and ensure a wood-first policy on public buildings funded or part-funded by the Council.
QDP11 Objective 3: To promote the reuse and recycling of materials to promote the circular economy and reduce construction and demolition waste.

5.3 Sustainable Rural Neighbourhoods

Context

The Rural Area is primarily concentrated in the Dublin Mountains to the southwest and the western fringes of the County surrounding the settlements of Saggart, Rathcoole and Newcastle. In terms of settlements located within the rural hinterland there are small clusters of development at Glenasmole and Redgap and the small rural settlement of Brittas to the extreme west of the County.

The rural sense of place is rooted in the community, through families and community connections, through the long-standing experience of meitheal, and in the local history and heritage of the area and the people who formed it.

There are many physical elements of a settlement that give character and a sense of place. These include the urban grain of the historic core, existing buildings of high architectural merit and local characteristics such as local materials, building lines, walls, building heights, rivers, streams, trees, hedgerows and other local landscape features. Recognising and enhancing the existing context and character is a key component for any development or plan within the rural hinterland.

Residential development within the rural hinterland is carefully managed through the Rural Housing Policy and Local Need Criteria in accordance with the *Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines* (2005) and Circular SP 5 / 08. The policy approach promoted in this Development Plan is considered to provide a reasonable balance between the delivery of appropriate and justifiable residential development in the rural parts of the County.

Brittas

As the largest rural village in the County, Brittas is located in the foothills of the Dublin Mountains, on the southwestern fringes and close to the border with County Wicklow. The village settlement of Brittas is zoned High Amenity – Dublin Mountains (Objective HA-DM).

Brittas is strategically located on the N81 national secondary route and continues to experience development pressure; particularly one-off rural housing within the surrounding rural area. Its location at the Dublin Mountains presents opportunities for tourism development which could support the local economy.

To maintain and enhance the vitality of this rural village it is an aim of this plan to prepare a planning study for Brittas Village, in consultation with local residents, landowners and local representatives, having regard to the implications of the proposed Natural Heritage Area designations, the future protection and enhancement of the village, the development of tourism potential in the area with a view to the long-term viability of the local community.

Policy QDP12: Sustainable Rural Neighbourhoods

Protect and promote the sense of place and culture and the quality, character and distinctiveness of the County's rural hinterland that makes it an attractive place to live, work and visit.

QDP12 Objective 1:
To support the development of new initiatives such as walking trails connecting villages and smaller rural settlements, both for the enjoyment of local people and as an attractor for visitors to the area, promoting sustainable local economic development.

QDP12 Objective 2:
To support the improvement of public transport infrastructure and services in the rural hinterland.

QDP12 Objective 3:
To ensure that new development builds on or enhances the streetscape, landscape character and open space network of the settlement through high quality design and landscaping.

QDP12 Objective 4:
To promote appropriate development that enhances the character and vitality of the existing settlements and which does not negatively impact on existing residential amenity.

QDP12 Objective 5:
To ensure any proposals for development within rural settlements (subject to local need criteria being established as per Chapter 6 of this plan) demonstrates a high-quality design response and will not impact negatively on the character and amenity of the existing settlement. In determining a design response, new developments should reference the elements of the settlement that give character and a sense of place, such as: the urban grain of the historic core, existing buildings of high architectural merit and local characteristics (such as local materials, building lines, walls, building heights, rivers, streams, trees / hedgerows and other local landscape features).

QDP12 SLO 1:
To support Brittas as a sustainable community and rural village of outstanding natural beauty and to prepare a planning study and study boundary for Brittas Village, in consultation with local residents, landowners and local representatives, having regard to the implications of the proposed Natural Heritage Area designations, the future population and enhancement of the village and to development of a tourist and leisure facility to include accommodation, associated services and activities at Brittas Ponds and surrounding lands with a view to maintaining and protecting existing assets and the long-term viability of the local community. The planning and tourism study shall be commenced within 12 months of the adoption of this County Development Plan and shall include an analysis of population and housing data.

5.4 Plans / Frameworks

Plans and Frameworks should be developed in a manner that applies a layered approach focusing on the receiving baseline environment with the aim of ensuring the preservation, protection, and enhancement of existing natural, cultural and built heritage and the ecosystem services they provide. Opportunities should be identified early on in the design process to further develop and enhance the Green Infrastructure network and biodiversity within the County.

Incorporating these initial steps, the development type and requirements of the plan / framework should be analysed and implemented in a manner which places Climate Action Measures, Quality Design and Healthy Placemaking at the forefront of all aspects of its formulation and development.

Policy QDP13: Plans / Frameworks – General

Continue to work closely with all infrastructure providers to ensure the timely delivery of social, community, economic and sustainable transportation infrastructure in tandem with new residential development and in accordance with the provisions of the County Development Plan or any Local Area Plan, SDZ Planning Scheme, other strategic land designations or framework / masterplan in place in the area.

5.4.1 Local Area Plans

Local Area Plans will be prepared for areas where new development requires a co-ordinated approach and in particular for areas that are likely to experience large scale development or that are in need of regeneration.

Local Area Plans must be consistent with the policies and objectives of the County Development Plan and ministerial guidelines. Policy changes will help inform the decision to review existing Local Area Plans.

Policy QDP14: Local Area Plans (LAP)

Prepare Local Area Plans as appropriate, prioritising areas that are likely to experience large scale residential or commercial development or regeneration.

QDP14 Objective 1:
To support a plan led approach through Local Area Plans in identified areas by ensuring that development complies with the specific local requirements of the Local Area Plan, having regard to the policies and objectives contained in this Development Plan and ministerial guidelines.

QDP14 Objective 2:
To promote a layered approach to the preparation of Local Area Plans which designs in at an early stage the receiving baseline environment and builds on the opportunities this presents for placemaking, having particular regard to the enhancement of green infrastructure networks for biodiversity and amenity.

QDP14 Objective 3:
To prepare a LAP for Clondalkin, the extent of the boundary to be defined, which will be guided by the *Local Area Plans Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, 2013 (Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government) or any superseding guidelines and which will incorporate:

- A vision for the development of Clondalkin
- Wider urban design principles
- Framework plans for larger infill sites
- A Conservation Plan
- A local Green Infrastructure strategy derived from the County GI Strategy
- Local Transport Plan.

QDP14 Objective 4:
To prepare a Local Area Plan for the community of Kingswood (Naas Road) with a view to the sustainability of this community being protected and which provides for retail and other commercial opportunities and amenities, community facilities, employment opportunities and connectivity to the adjoining residential areas.

QDP14 Objective 5:
To prepare a Local Area Plan for Saggart.

QDP14 Objective 6:
To require a Local Transport Plan to be carried out as part of any LAP preparation process, commensurate to the scale of the LAP. The Local Transport Plan / Local Area Plan should have regard to the NTA and TII Guidance Note on Area Based Transportation Assessments 2018 or any subsequent updates thereof, and will be subject to screening for AA and SEA.

QDP14 SLO 1:
To ensure the sustainable long-term growth of Citywest that continues to promote and facilitate the development of the Citywest / Fortunestown area in accordance with the phasing set out in the Fortunestown Local Area Plan 2012-2022 (as extended) or any superseding LAP, and that appropriate levels of services, social and sports infrastructure, facilities and economic activity is met to meet the needs of the current and future population growth.

QDP14 SLO 2:
To prepare a new Local Area Plan for Ballyboden.

QDP14 SLO 3:
That the provisions of the Ballycullen - Oldcourt Local Area Plan (2014) as extended, in respect of the steep topography in the lands zoned RES-N between Stocking Lane, Ballycullen Road and the M50 (Map 10) remain in force during the lifetime of this Plan having regard to ministerial guidelines.

5.4.2 Strategic Development Zones

Within South Dublin County the Government designated 223.5 hectares of land at Adamstown as a Strategic Development Zone in 2001. The Adamstown SDZ Planning Scheme (amended) 2014 and 2020 sets out a planning framework to support the delivery of approximately 9,395 dwelling units and supporting infrastructure and facilities. This scheme has progressed at a steady pace since the adoption of the 2016 County Development Plan with a remaining development capacity for over 5,000 units. In March 2021, the Council successfully secured funding of €9.7 million from the Urban Regeneration Development fund for supplementary strategic funding to deliver the Central Boulevard Park, the Civic Building and the Town Centre Plaza. As part of this application 585 residential units will be delivered. As set out in Chapter 2 Table 8 it is envisaged within this plan that in region of 5,240 units will be delivered within the 6-year lifetime of this plan.

The Government has also designated 180 hectares of land at Clonburris as a Strategic Development Zone. The planning scheme for Clonburris was approved in May 2019. The Clonburris SDZ Planning Scheme sets out a planning framework to support the delivery of between 7,700-11,100 dwelling units and supporting infrastructure and facilities. Significant work has been carried out in regard to enabling infrastructural works required to kick start development. In March 2021, South Dublin County Council successfully secured funding of €176.6 million from the Urban Regeneration Development fund for supplementary strategic funding to deliver the huge quantum of infrastructure required to unlock the delivery of over 8,700 homes in Clonburris over the next 10 years.

Policy QDP15: Strategic Development Zones (SDZS)
Continue to implement the approved Planning Schemes for Adamstown and Clonburris SDZs.
QDP15 Objective 1: To support the delivery of the identified infrastructure to facilitate sustainable development in South Dublin's Strategic Development Zones.

5.4.3 Framework / Masterplans

Framework plans and Masterplans act as a preliminary design guide for the future development of lands within the County. These plans are informed by background research and baseline analysis, identifying opportunities for future development and possible constraints. These plans set a framework for future development of the relevant area.

In certain instances, the preparation of site design briefs will be an appropriate tool to provide a design rationale for site development, building design and landscaping elements, ensuring that the proposed development fits within its context. The design brief will demonstrate how the design is guided and informed by good urban design practices. It will provide a clear direction for how the site should develop, including a set of design principles and how these principles will be achieved.

Policy QDP16: Framework Plans (FP)
Prepare Framework Plans and Masterplans as required for identified areas on Council owned or other lands to facilitate a co-ordinated approach to development.
QDP16 Objective 1: To prepare Framework Plans or Masterplans on identified lands to ensure a co-ordinated approach to delivery ensuring that they are structured in a logical, clear and comprehensible manner demonstrating and providing the background to the land use and design methodology and having due regard to the context of such lands.
QDP16 Objective 2: To support the City Edge Strategic Framework and any future framework for the area in delivering urban growth and regeneration for the County and the wider Region, recognising its significant potential as the largest regeneration area in the country.
QDP16 Objective 3: To identify potential development sites within Palmerstown and to prepare site design briefs for these sites in order to provide a framework to guide appropriate development including connectivity.
QDP16 Objective 4: To consider the need for a Local Transport Plan to be prepared as part of any Framework / Masterplan, commensurate to the scale of the Framework / Masterplan. The Framework / Masterplan will be subject to screening for AA and SEA.



5.5 Climate Action Audit

Climate Action Audit

Climate Action Audit – Quality Design and Healthy Placemaking

Source of Green House Gases (GHGs)

The potential sources of GHGs that may arise from not promoting the principles of **Quality Design and Healthy Placemaking** are:

- Less compact urban growth and urban sprawl can lead to more car-based journeys and create less opportunities to use more sustainable and renewable energy sources.
- Poorly connected Neighbourhoods can lead to more car-based journeys.
- Unattractive public realm, unwelcoming and poorly designed streets / spaces can deter people from using active modes of transport to access services and recreational amenities.
- Use of unsustainable structural materials in buildings and the public realm.
- Urban generated growth in the rural hinterland areas.

Measures to Address Climate Impacts

This chapter contains policies and objectives which promote measures that have the potential to reduce the climate impact of providing for **Quality Design and Healthy Placemaking** as follows:

- Support the delivery of the NPF 'National Strategic Outcomes' and the RSES 'Regional Specific Outcomes' specifically relevant to the delivery of sustainable Neighbourhoods within South Dublin County relating to Compact Growth, Sustainable Mobility, Enhanced Accessibility, Enhanced Amenities and Heritage, Sustainable Management of Infrastructure, Access to Childcare, Education and Health Services and a Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society.
- Support the efficient use of land with a focus on key urban centres, and to achieve development densities that can support vibrant, compact, walkable places that prioritise pedestrian movement, reducing the need for car-based travel and carbon emissions while also facilitating opportunities for the use of more sustainable and renewable energy sources.
- Promoting and facilitating a mix of uses and the efficient use of land and infrastructure in line with the provisions of NPO 4 and 26 of the NPF and RPO's 6.12, 9.10 and 9.11 of the RSES.

- → Creating inclusive and safe environments in which people can move through, encouraging active modes of transport and striving towards the delivery of connected neighbourhoods and the 10-minute settlement concept in line with the RSES.
- → Supporting the delivery of the Cycle South Dublin programme of work to improve cycle infrastructure in the County, attracting more users and reducing car-based journeys.
- → Creating a strong sense of place and enabling connections across the County through a robust and resilient Green Infrastructure network which employs nature-based solutions while also contributing directly to climate action measures through carbon sequestration and other measures.
- → Seek more Inclusive Development so that people can access services and appropriate housing locally, reducing car-based travel.
- → Promote the use of sustainably sourced building materials and the reuse of demolition and excavated materials.
- → Promote the use of structural materials that have low to zero embodied energy and CO2 emissions.

