

Direction to the Chief Executive regarding the preparation of the draft Waterford City and County Development Plan 2022-2028.

1. Introduction

Following workshops held with Members from each Municipal District during December 2020 and January 2021 in order to consider the Chief Executive (CE) Report on the pre-draft development plan public consultation process, the matters raised by Members are set out below. These matters now form a direction by the Members to the CE, pursuant to Section 11 (4) (d) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

In considering and discussing the pre-draft CE's Report, the Members have had due regard to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area to which the development plan relates, and as such the direction set out herein is considered to be strategic in nature, consistent with the draft core strategy, and takes into account the statutory obligations of the local authority in a way which is consistent with the national and regional development objectives specified in the National Planning Framework (NPF), the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) and planning policy requirements specified in guidelines issued by the Minister under Section 28 of the Act.

2. Direction by the Members

Set out hereunder are the issues to be considered by the Chief Executive in preparing the draft development plan.

1. Detailed consideration to be given to devising development standards in terms of mixed densities across areas of Waterford City and other towns and villages, open space provision, apartment standards, place naming and other relevant standards which contribute positively towards sustainable placemaking for new and existing residents/ communities while in all cases ensuring development is universally accessible.
2. Support to be clearly provided in the draft development plan to progress delivery of the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) key enablers as set out in the NPF and RSES which include inter alia the North Quays, TUSE and the Learning City and County, Airport & Port, 24/7 Healthcare, additional river crossings.
3. There needs to be a balanced approach to the sustainable management of 'rural' housing in smaller settlements and in the open countryside. The draft development plan needs to provide real alternatives for those wishing to build their own home, and manage demand accordingly by providing achievable alternatives and choices. The draft development plan policy objectives should support the delivery of serviced sites by WCCC to meet local demands for housing in rural settlements, avoid the situation where locals are priced out of the market and facilitate self build.
4. Consideration should be given to identification and protection of important views and scenic routes and across Waterford City & County.
5. An open space strategy should inform the layout of amenity and other areas across the city and larger towns. The draft development plan also needs to consider fully the role of Blue Green Infrastructure and consider (subject to further public consultation), a range of uses i.e.

active/ passive amenity, transport, biodiversity, etc for all lands zoned for amenity use. Furthermore amenity spaces should provide for a range of different scale spaces and creation of networks so as to facilitate choice within communities having regard to the 10 minute neighbourhood concept.

6. The draft development plan preparation process should take account of any update to statistics and data on foot of Census 2021 (when and if available) as well as trends over a number of intercensal periods, prior to making of the development plan in Q1 of 2022.
7. The draft development plan must ensure that adequate services and amenity are developed in tandem or preceding the build out of new neighbourhoods (housing) and that there is an appropriate mix of house type and tenure to enable the establishment of inclusive communities which will facilitate these communities to grow and age in situ. Policy objectives should support a range of options to deliver on housing need and demand for local communities i.e. co-operative housing, affordable and cost rental housing, serviced sites for self builds across urban and rural areas, Traveller accommodation, the special requirements of elderly people and persons with disabilities, etc.
8. The draft development plan must ensure, through collaboration in its preparation, its policy objectives and its implementation, that the Learning City and County initiative, along with the TUSE and other educational services, are fully integrated into the physical fabric and function of the city and county and WCCC progresses the achievement of the Initiative.
9. The draft development plan policy objectives must balance housing tenure, type and mix across and within settlements, having regard to current market conditions so as to facilitate choice for people wishing to purchase a home while developing compact centres. Specific examples raised include the balance within Waterford City, between Waterford City and Tramore and between Dungarvan and Abbeyside. This issue requires detailed consideration once a preliminary draft development plan is available for discussion with the Members in April 2021 and should be informed by details of council owned land bank, a new Housing Need and Demand Assessment and a new Housing Strategy.
10. The draft development plan must focus on building neighbourhoods and places where people wish to live and which are socially heterogeneous and inclusive.
11. The draft development plan must ensure that regeneration potential of the city and towns is supported and propelled through innovative policy objectives.
12. Preparation of policy objectives/ actions in the draft development plan and delivery of same should be a collaborative endeavour across all sections and departments within Waterford City & County Council, so as to ensure the plan is fully informed and there is a whole of council approach to implementation over its lifetime. Cappoquin was cited as an example of what transformational change can be achieved where such effective collaboration takes place. Collaboration with other agencies and bodies outside of Waterford City and County Council such as WIT/ TUSE, Land Development Agency, Irish Water, National Transport Authority and other is also important.
13. Ensure that the concept of the 10 minute neighbourhood is not just applied to new neighbourhoods, but that permeability and other measures are retrofitted across the city and urban and rural towns. The spatial extent of existing 10 minute neighbourhoods should be identified in the draft development plan and objectives identified to overcome challenges where identified.

14. The draft development plan must ensure that Ferrybank remains a focus for the Council, either through MASP implementation or other operational opportunities and measures.
15. The draft development plan policy objectives and actions need to ensure the strengthening of our rural settlements in particular in terms of service and infrastructure provision so as to facilitate choice for home building and the enhancement of their economic and social vibrancy and vitality.
16. All development should be infrastructure led and amenity spaces, footpaths, landscaping should frontload respective development. There should be a significant focus on strengthening settlements which are struggling in terms of retaining viable populations and commercial activity by way of enhancing amenity and service provision and placemaking.
17. The draft development plan should pursue a strategy of innovation in terms of sustainable building types and standards to meet the challenges of climate change. Such measures could include retention and refurbishment of existing building stock in preference to replacement, renewable micro generation, sustainable urban drainage and use of construction audits to ensure use of low carbon building materials. The draft plan should draw on examples from elsewhere.
18. Local Area Plans to be prepared once the final development plan is made should be realistic in terms of aspirations and targets and should be founded on a robust process of community engagement and consultation. Along with reviews of existing LAPs, detailed assessment of local issues such as transport and cycle/pedestrian links, car parking, schools and other local community/ infrastructure services should be undertaken through consultation with local communities to fully inform LAPs.
19. While recognising the need to strengthen the residential, economic and social function of towns and villages and their capacity to deliver choice in the residential market, the draft development plan preparation process should facilitate detailed discussion on issues arising relating to qualifying criteria for one-off housing in the open countryside and other development management issues. Examples raised include inter alia health needs of an applicant and associated carers needs, needs of the immediate family of a landowner, occupancy conditions, policy on minimum landholding size and access restrictions to regional road access.
20. Full and careful consideration to be given to the settlement hierarchy and role/function of smaller settlements within the hierarchy. Similar to other issues requiring detailed discussion during the draft development plan preparation, time will need to be given to discuss the new settlement hierarchy along with any proposed changes to land use zoning in settlements and associated policy which will facilitate a more flexible approach to development and which avoids reliance on land use zones in smaller settlements to manage development.
21. Rural tourism in particular needs to be supported through the draft development plan strategies and policy objectives, in order to support local communities and develop a tourism product based on our natural assets, culture, heritage and landscape. Furthermore these assets and attractors need to be appropriately planned, serviced and managed to avoid issues such as degradation, damage to the environment and road safety issues.
22. There should be a policy focus on supporting social and community/ co-operative enterprise as a means of enabling communities and areas to develop. WCCC is well placed to pilot a worker cooperative development scheme through the LEO and in conjunction with the LCDC, PPN and other bodies.

23. The draft development plan should support the attainment of full broadband connectivity and the further roll out of free public wifi to smaller towns and villages should be an objective.
24. The draft development plan policy objectives must ensure that overdevelopment does not arise, particularly in the case of dominant housing development in any single area without adequate services and amenities such as sustainable transport, open space, childcare and services for teenagers and young adults.
25. The draft development plan should show leadership on climate action through commitment to the Local Government Climate Charter and the European Mayors' Covenant on Climate and Energy, WCCC Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019 - 2024 and should mainstream actions throughout the plan through objectives on energy efficiency in Council buildings, housing stock and fleet; a tree planting strategy that identifies sites for planting trees, sets ambitious targets, and includes policy on the planting of trees and native hedgerows as part of development. There should also be a focus on climate mitigation in addition to adaptation.
26. The draft development plan should set out objectives on waste management and combating pollution through partnership and collaboration with the private sector.
27. The consultation process underpinning and informing the final development plan should be specifically targeted towards younger persons and associated support groups.
28. The draft development plan should recognise the Gaeltacht as a single unit in the settlement hierarchy and an LAP should be prepared to support its role as a unique regional tourism and cultural attractor. Consultation on the draft development plan and any LAP should take place in the Gaeltacht, with bilingual facilitation. Statutory development plans should recognise and support the language planning process, and refer to the current language plan 2018-2024. Gaeltacht na nDéise should be identified in statutory development plans as a centre of excellence for television production.
29. The policy objectives of the draft development plan should have a demonstrable link to UN Agenda 2030 and the SDGs with targets for implementation and monitoring identified where relevant and possible.
30. The draft development plan should further substantiate the provisions of strategic policy no. 64 as set out in the CE Report i.e. Continue to identify and extend a network of locally important biodiversity sites across the city and county i.e. TPO's, amenity trees, Blue Dot catchments, wetland and other habitats so as to enhance their resilience to climate change.
31. The draft development plan must support the role of Dungarvan as the "county town" and community services/ facilities must be commensurate with the status as a key town. Specific reference is made to the need for a public swimming pool and a sports centre.
32. The policy objectives of the draft development plan should be SMART...specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, resourced, and time bound.
33. To help facilitate monitoring and review of the development plan implementation, policy objectives should be summarised in table format containing details of who is responsible for implementation, relevant primary stakeholders and a timeline for implementation. The table should also contain details per objective of the corresponding UN SDG's relevant to each.
34. Further discussion is needed around facilitation of smooth interdepartmental implementation of the development plan within and across the council which should be undertaken by an operational steering group to include representatives from the Planning SPC. The Steering Group should update and report on progress of implementation of the table of development objectives at least twice annually to the Planning SPC and the plenary council. Where

applicable, there should be cross-referencing between the development plan and operational annual service plans to help ensure that ongoing work of council departments is aligned with and furthering the objectives of the development plan.

Addendum: At the Plenary meeting of Waterford City & County Council held on the 14th January 2021 Cllr. Thomas Phelan requested that the Direction to the CE should also include a reference to a "just transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society". The Plenary Council resolved to include the addendum and submit the Direction as set out in this report to the CE.

Note 1: Prior to the draft development plan being placed on public display in June 2021, the Members request a workshop on their obligations under the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015 and associate regulation and guidance.

Note 2: A map of lands in WCCC ownership should be prepared to facilitate discussions and debate with the Members prior to draft plan being completed in June 2021.

Note 3: Timeline for the development plan preparation process is set out below and will be continually updated and circulated to the Members throughout the process for ease of reference.

Activity	Duration	Start	Finish
Development Plan Preparation Period.	Max 104 wks	Mon 20/07/20	Fri 15/07/22
Pre Draft Plan Public Consultation. NOW COMPLETED	8 wks	Mon 20/07/20	Mon 14/09/20
Prepare CE Report on submissions and submit to Plenary Council. NOW COMPLETED	8 wks	Mon 14/09/20	Mon 09/11/20
Liaise and discuss with Plenary Council and obtain Resolution on CE Report. CURRENT PHASE	10 wks	Mon 09/11/20	Mon 18/01/21
Prepare a Draft Dev Plan.	12 wks	Mon 18/01/21	Mon 12/04/21
Submit Draft Dev Plan to Plenary Council and obtain Resolution.	8 wks	Mon 12/04/21	Mon 07/06/21
Notice of preparation of Draft Dev Plan.	2 wks	Mon 07/06/21	Mon 21/06/21
Public Consultation on Draft Dev Plan.	10 wks	Mon 21/06/21	Mon 30/08/21
Prepare CE Report on submissions received and submit to Plenary Council for consideration.	12 wks	Mon 30/08/21	Mon 22/11/21
Resolution of Plenary Council on CE Report and Draft Dev Plan.	12 wks	Mon 22/11/21	Mon 14/02/22
Notice of Material Alterations if necessary.	3 wks	Mon 14/02/22	Mon 07/03/22
Final Public Consultation on Material Alterations.	4 wks	Mon 07/03/22	Mon 04/04/22
Prepare C.E. Report on submissions.	8 wks	Mon 04/04/22	Mon 30/05/22
Plenary Council to consider CE Report and make Resolution.	6 wks	Mon 30/05/22	Mon 11/07/22
New Dev Plan comes into force.	6 wks	Mon 11/07/22	Mon 22/08/22

