A VISION FOR SOUTH DUBLIN’S FUTURE
Chief Executive's Invitation

The review of the County Development Plan and the preparation of a new Plan is one of the most important functions of South Dublin County Council. The South Dublin County Council Development Plan 2016-2022 will set out a vision for South Dublin's future to 2022 and beyond.

The review has come at a time of change. Following a period of economic contraction the outlook for the period of the next Plan is more positive. This time of transition and renewed growth presents new challenges in the way we plan for our future and offers opportunities to examine innovative ways and means of achieving a brighter future for the citizens of South Dublin County.

The publication of this booklet "A Vision for South Dublin's Future" is the first step in the plan making process. The booklet presents an overview of the main development issues currently impacting on South Dublin County and identifies the kind of planning matters that the next County Development Plan could address.

We have attempted to highlight the issues that we think are important but this list is by no means exhaustive. Now we want to hear from you. Have we overlooked issues, which are of importance to you? If so we need to know what these are.

Public input at the start of the plan making process is important so that the final Plan can reflect and respond to public concerns and aspirations.

Daniel McLoughlin,
Chief Executive, South Dublin County Council
September 2014
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Introduction
Introduction
In collaboration with the community, South Dublin County Council is starting a review of the South Dublin County Council Development Plan, 2010-2016 and will create a new County Development Plan that will shape the future growth of the County over the six year period to 2022 and beyond.

The review begins on Friday 5th September 2014 and the plan process will take up to two years, concluding in the publication of the South Dublin County Council Development Plan 2016-2022.

To inform the process a short booklet, “A Vision for South Dublin’s Future” has been prepared. This booklet gives a broad overview of the main development issues currently impacting on South Dublin County and identifies the kind of planning matters that the next County Development Plan could address. A more detailed background paper that explores each of the issues in more detail is also available at www.southdublindevplan.ie.

Context
The County Development Plan will set out a strategic planning framework for the growth of the County in line with the higher level policies of the National Spatial Strategy and the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area.

National Spatial Strategy (NSS)
The National Spatial Strategy is a 20-year framework for balanced regional development across Ireland and forms the basis for Regional Planning Guidelines nationally. The Strategy recognises the role that Dublin plays in the economic life of the Region and Country, as a driver of the national economy.

Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) for the Greater Dublin Area (GDA)
The Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010 to 2022 (RPGs) include a strong vision for Dublin as a major European centre, competing as a city region internationally. This reflects a growing trend towards internationally competitive city regions. Dublin compares well when benchmarked against other international city regions, in terms of competitiveness and quality of life, but is small by international standards. For continued success, it is therefore vital that the Region continues to prosper and grow and that the Regions attractiveness as a location in which to live, work and do business is protected.

The RPGs Settlement Strategy sets out a clear hierarchy for the Greater Dublin Area (Dublin and Mid-East Region) with the metropolitan area at its core and a number of key growth towns in the hinterland area. South Dublin County is almost entirely within the metropolitan urban area and contains the metropolitan consolidation towns of Lucan, Clondalkin and Tallaght.

Overall Approach
South Dublin County plays a major role in the life of the Greater Dublin Area. It houses 15% of the GDAs population, 21% of the Dublin Regions population and is well placed to accommodate a larger proportion in the future. South Dublin County also has strong economic ties across these regions. Of the 77,699 people employed in South Dublin County, 93% live in the GDA.

The County comprises a variety of places, all with differing qualities and policy needs. This includes historic villages and older suburbs, emerging communities in newer suburbs and a rural hinterland; it also forms part of a major metropolitan area, to which it has a large number of essential links. Many citizens of the County, particularly in the established suburbs, associate strongly with the wider City, rather than the County, allowing them to access the economic and social opportunities offered by the city region as a whole.
Population, housing and economic growth over the past decade has been modest relative to neighbouring counties. As an integral part of the growing metropolitan area, it is important that South Dublin County is positioned to take its full share of the Region's growth and that it continues to offer a high quality environment within which to live, work and do business. The County will need to make the most of its proximity to Dublin City and natural amenities such as the mountains and the river valleys.

While a move to consolidated growth along transport corridors appears to have limited housing output in the recent past, it creates a good starting point for the future. The review of the County Development Plan is an opportunity to set out a vision for South Dublin County's future within the Dublin Region, based on a sustainable growth strategy with quality of life at its core.

Overarching considerations that will inform policies and objectives throughout the plan are:

(a) Quality of Life, with emphasis on meeting key economic, environmental, social and cultural indicators;
(b) Prosperity, with an emphasis on contributing to a competitive business environment that supports economic development, job creation and prosperity for all;
(c) Sustainability, with an emphasis on making better use of key resources such as land, buildings, water, energy, waste and transport infrastructure;
(d) Health and Wellbeing, by facilitating active and healthy lifestyles with increased opportunities for walking, cycling and active sport and recreation; and
(e) Climate Change, with increased emphasis on reducing climate change at a local level through settlement and travel patterns, energy use and protection of Green Infrastructure.

In line with the regional approach, a compact urban area with good public transport, less reliance on the car and a sustainable mix of services (access to employment, schools, libraries, shops, parks, and amenities) is envisaged. There is a need for an appropriate mix of good quality housing in attractive neighbourhoods that offer a high quality of life for all. We must seek to grow sensitively and selectively, sustaining the attractions of the suburbs and villages of the County. We must also ensure that development takes place in locations that can contribute to wider social and economic goals, such as town centres and renewal areas.

Significant capacity remains for new housing within the established urban footprint where the value of existing infrastructure and services can be maximised. There are also a number of key development locations at the edge of the built up area along transport corridors that offer significant potential. A balanced approach that values and protects open spaces, landscape features and the other attractive features which characterise the County’s environment will be favoured, by seeking medium density housing formats in suburban contexts and channeling higher densities into major urban centres and close to transport nodes.

To set the context for the Plan review and inform discussion research has been undertaken into the following:

- Population & Housing;
- Sustainable Communities;
- Economic Development;
- Retail & Centres;
- Transport & Mobility;
- Infrastructure;
- Green Infrastructure;
- Heritage, Amenities & Landscape; and
- Environmental Assessment & Climate Change.

An overview is outlined below. Background papers are also available at www.southdublindevplan.ie.
Population & Housing
Population

The population of South Dublin County was 265,205 persons in 2011. This represents a growth rate of 11% between 2002 and 2011, relative to a growth rate of 13.4% in the Dublin Region (South Dublin, Dublin City, Fingal and Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown). South Dublin is home to 21% of the Dublin Region’s population and has maintained this proportion over the last three census periods. Although population has grown, there has been overall out migration, with natural increase (i.e. births minus deaths) exceeding population growth by 5,696 persons between 2002 and 2006 and by 810 persons between 2006 and 2011.

The population and family profile of the County is changing. The population is relatively young when compared to the State and the Dublin Region overall, but is growing older. In proportional terms 23% of the population is under 15 years of age, 13% is aged between 15 and 24 years, 55% is aged between 25 and 64 years and 9% is aged 65 years and over. While adults (25-64) dominate the population, the proportions of both younger (0-18) and older (65+) persons is growing.

The population aged 65 and over increased by almost a third between 2006 and 2011, while the share of young adults (19-24 year olds) decreased by 11% representing the highest recorded decrease in this age cohort in the Dublin Region. Families with adult children are the most prevalent individual family type in the County at 26.5% of all families. However, the combined proportion of pre-school, early-school and pre-adolescent families (oldest child 0-14) grew to 36% between 2006 and 2011. The proportion of older families (empty-nest and retired) is also growing and had a combined proportion of 16% in 2011.

Housing

There were 97,298 housing units in the County in 2011, an increase of 27% on 2002 stock. Although significant, it is noteworthy that South Dublin County has lost share of housing to other Greater Dublin Area Counties that experienced higher growth rates. In line with the National and Regional trend there has been a slowdown in growth in recent years. House completions in South Dublin reached a peak of 3,256 dwellings in 2005, falling year on year thereafter to 203 dwellings in 2013, representing a 94% reduction. With signs of increased activity in the residential construction sector, it is likely that the number of completions will rise in 2014 and into the plan period.

The semi-detached house remains the most common housing type in the County at 44% of all units, confirming that the County’s housing stock remains predominantly low density. The number of apartments grew from 3% of housing stock in 2002 to 23% in 2011. In terms of age, 75% of the County’s housing stock was constructed after 1969. There have been two very significant periods of construction, with 26% of housing stock constructed between 1971 and 1980 and almost 20% constructed between 2001 and 2011.
Future Growth

The Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area 2010–2022 incorporate population targets for 2016 and 2022. The 2016 target for the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) is 1.956 million persons and the 2022 target is 2.104 million persons. At county level the RPG population targets for South Dublin are 287,341 persons by 2016 and 308,467 persons by 2022.

In 2013, the CSO published revised Regional Population Forecasts for the period from 2016 to 2031. These forecasts revise future population projections downward. The CSO published a range of scenarios based on varying fertility and migration assumptions. The ‘most likely’ scenario ‘M2F2 Traditional’ forecasts a population of 1.858 million in the GDA by 2016 (98,000 persons less than the RPG target); 1.973 million by 2021, (131,000 less than the RPG 2022 target) and 2.087 million by 2026.

The Greater Dublin Area is forecast to grow by almost 10% between 2011 and 2021 and to account for almost 40% of the State’s population by 2021. A population of 1.448 million is forecast for the Dublin Region by 2026, a 15% increase. Population gain will come from natural growth and inward migration with an expected reversal of a previous trend of out-migration from the Dublin Region.

To ensure a sustainable distribution of population within the Greater Dublin Area, it will be necessary to make provision for population growth in South Dublin County, based on the growth strategy outlined in the Regional Planning Guidelines.

South Dublin County has steadily maintained 21% of the population of the Dublin Region over the last three recorded censuses (2002, 2006 and 2011), but in the GDA has lost population and housing share to the adjoining Counties of Kildare, Meath, Wicklow and Fingal. Given South Dublin’s metropolitan context within the Dublin Region and the extent of land availability it is suggested that the County is well placed to accommodate an increased proportion of the Dublin Region’s future population and housing growth. Based on accommodating up to a 25% share of forecasted regional growth between 2016 and 2022 (as opposed to the traditional 21%) the population of the County could grow by up to 31,500 persons to 2022 (12%). It is estimated that the County has already experienced a natural growth of 9,500 people (4%) since 2011.

There will be a need to ensure an adequate provision of zoned and serviced lands to accommodate housing development, taking into account forecast population growth, housing occupancy rates, housing vacancy rates and density of development. The County Development Plan review presents an opportunity to consider policies and objectives to achieve this.

Questions for Consideration

• Is there a loss of citizens to other areas and why? Can the County Development Plan address out-migration?
• Given the continuing population growth in the Dublin Region, should South Dublin County look to accommodate an increased proportion of the Region’s population growth?
• Where should new housing be located? Is there capacity for infill development in established urban areas? Can we achieve efficient use of land and deliver good quality housing and attractive communities? Is there an adequate supply of zoned development land?
• Is there an underutilisation of the County’s housing stock?
• Given the increasing age profile of the population within the County is there merit in facilitating appropriately located niche housing or retirement villages within the County.
• How do we cater for smaller family and household sizes in terms of the provision of housing?
• How do we reduce the impacts of new housing development on the environment?
• How do we ensure that population and housing are distributed so as to make the most efficient use of services and facilities?
Sustainable Communities

The term ‘community infrastructure’ is generally taken to include infrastructure and facilities that address the social, community and cultural requirements of the population and includes items such as schools, libraries, community centres, health centres, childcare facilities, parks and open spaces. Sustainable neighbourhoods need a range of community facilities that are fit for purpose, accessible and adaptable. The timing of delivery can also impact on social cohesion. The review of the County Development Plan presents an opportunity to assess provision across the County and to plan for future needs in a strategic and evidence based manner.

South Dublin County has developed since the 1960s around a historic village network, with 26% of the housing stock constructed between 1971 and 1980 and almost 20% constructed between 2001 and 2011. These construction periods have defined the age profile and demographic make up of communities within the County.

The inner suburbs developed from the late 1960s to mid 1990s to the east of the M50 and around the historic villages of Tallaght, Palmerstown, Clondalkin, Rathfarnham, Templeogue, Terenure and Lucan. Proportionately, 54% of the County’s population live in these more established areas. These areas have an aging population with a higher proportion of older persons (13% aged 65 and over compared to 9% countywide) and a lower proportion of children (18.4% aged 0-14 compared to 23.1% countywide). Census data shows that population numbers in this area have stagnated or are falling. These areas grew around historic villages and services and community facilities expanded to meet demand, giving rise to areas that are relatively well served.

From the mid 1990s development commenced on agricultural lands to the south of Lucan and west of Clondalkin, Tallaght and Rathfarnham, resulting in the emergence of new communities. Proportionately, 40% of the County’s population live in new communities. These areas have a higher proportion of children (28.5% aged 0-14 compared to 23.1% countywide) and a lower proportion of older people (4% aged 65 years and over compared to 9% countywide). These areas have grown by 56% since 1991, have a more diverse population and a level of transition is ongoing. Unlike earlier expansions, these communities did not grow around established villages and services and community facilities have been slower to emerge.

The rural and mountain area includes the rural villages of Newcastle, Rathcoole and Saggart and accommodates 6% of the County’s population overall. While population growth of 37% has occurred in this area since 1991, the rural and mountain communities have held a steady share of 5 - 6% of the County population. This area reflects the County age profile, although with a slightly higher proportion of older persons and a slightly lower proportion of children. These areas focus on vibrant local villages that contain a range of services and community facilities.
Community Infrastructure

While the County has a relatively good offer of community infrastructure, the spatial distribution of facilities is weighted in favour of the more established communities and rural and mountain areas. Almost 67% of the County’s playing pitches; 75% of health centres; and 86% of libraries are located in the more established areas. Approximately 64% of primary schools and 65% of post-primary schools are located within the more established areas. Community centres are relatively well distributed.

Key considerations for the review will be the need to achieve a more equitable distribution of social and community infrastructure, and the need to retain the viability of infrastructure in established areas where population numbers are stagnant or falling. Increased diversity of population and a policy shift towards health and wellbeing will all influence the policy response.

Questions for Consideration

- How can the value of existing community facilities be maximised?
- Can a more equitable distribution of social and community infrastructure be achieved?
- Can the viability of services and community infrastructure be sustained in maturing areas with stagnant or falling populations?
- How should community infrastructure be designed, resourced, managed and maintained so that it remains sustainable and adequately addresses local needs?
- How can South Dublin County Council facilitate the timely provision of new educational facilities?
- What policies are needed in the Development Plan to cater for the differing housing, retail, economic, religious and recreation needs of the County’s diverse population?
Economic Development
Economic Development

Following a period of sustained contraction in the Irish economy the economic outlook for the period 2016 to 2022 is more positive with key economic indicators showing signs of improvement. South Dublin County is well positioned to participate in economic recovery, as part of the Dublin City Region. Dublin City is Ireland’s only city of international scale and the engine of Ireland’s national economy. It accommodates 30% of the States population, generates 40% of national output and outperforms all other regions in respect of key economic indicators.

Dublin’s dominance reflects an international trend towards competitive city regions that attract investment and economic activity almost independently of the national economy. Dublin performs well when compared against other city regions for business competitiveness and quality of life but is small by international standards. The OECD ranked Dublin 77th out of 78 cities for population size in 2007. Not all cities within this population range are successful on a global stage, so continued investment in the areas that make the Dublin Region attractive is necessary, if Dublin’s Global position is to be maintained and improved.

South Dublin County has a strong and diverse economic base in its own right. The County is home to 6,823 business entities: - 52% industrial, 23% retail shops, 14% office and 11% other. Economic sectors include biopharma, information technology, communications, electronics, hospitality, retail, transport, internationally traded services and prepared food.

In 2011, there were 77,699 people employed in South Dublin County. Of these, 54% commuted into the County from elsewhere. 80% of the County’s labourforce was at work in 2011 and 66% of those in employment worked outside of the County.

Economic activity is focused around designated employment sites at locations such as Citywest, Grange Castle, Cookstown, Ballymount and Greenogue and in urban centres such as Tallaght and Clondalkin. The County has experienced high commercial vacancy rates across all business sectors during the downturn, with a rate of 16.5% for 2011. In line with other economic indicators this appears to be improving with a reduced rate of 12.5% in 2014.

An important aspect of the review process will be to assess the capacity of existing employment lands, to determine whether additional zoned lands may be required and to assess the potential of established industrial areas to rejuvenate or evolve. There is a total of approximately 1,600 hectares of zoned employment land within the County. While much of this is developed there are 688 hectares of undeveloped greenfield lands and significant potential for the renewal and intensification of established employment areas.

Economic growth over the last two decades has been strongly dependent on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and this is expected to continue. It is therefore important that South Dublin County seeks to protect and enhance the factors that make the County attractive for FDI and that provision is made to accommodate further large scale FDI investment.

There is an increased emphasis on strengthening entrepreneurship and indigenous enterprise as part of the national export led growth strategy. Since 2013, Local Authorities have a stronger and more direct role in supporting economic development and enterprise. The establishment of Local Enterprise Offices is the most noticeable change. The Development Plan has a role to play by ensuring that a clear and consistent framework for development exists, by making ‘space’ for growing Irish businesses and by ensuring that policies and objectives are supportive of business.

Tourism contributes to the economic and social well being of an area on many levels. It generates revenue, supports jobs, and creates a critical mass to sustain services and events that may not otherwise be viable. Infrastructure and enhancement projects linked to tourism, improve quality of life for all. South Dublin has tourism potential. The County’s heritage, village networks and amenities such as the mountains and river valleys all offer opportunities that can be used to strengthen the tourism offer of the Region.

Questions for Consideration

- What policies should the Plan include to promote enterprise and employment?
- Is there adequate land for employment/enterprise purposes?
- How can the Council support education/training opportunities in the County?
- What can County Development Plan policy do to promote and encourage indigenous enterprise?
- What can County Development Plan policy do to promote and encourage tourism to the County?
Retail & Centres

The Retail Hierarchy set out in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) Retail Planning Strategy 2008 – 2016 forms the basis for retail planning in South Dublin County. The hierarchy conforms Dublin City Centre as the prime retailing centre for the Greater Dublin Area (Level 1) and a number of ‘Metropolitan & Major Town Centres’ as significant retailing centres at a County level (Level 2). These larger centres are supported by a necklace of lower order Level 3 and Level 4 centres. In total there are 10 no. Level 2 and 3 Retail Centres in South Dublin County.

South Dublin has a diverse network of centres that include historic villages and more recent shopping areas. These centres perform a retail function and have varying levels of civic, social, cultural and leisure activity. Tallaght is the County Town and a Level 2 Retail Centre. The designated Town Centres of Liffey Valley and Clondalkin are Level 2 and 3 Retail Centres respectively. There is a wider network of District Centres at Level 3, including Lucan Village and shopping centre, Rathfarnham Village, Kilnamanagh, Cramlin (Ashleaf) and Fortunestown. Future Level 3 Retail Centres are planned in the developing areas of Adamstown and Clonburris. There is a network of neighbourhood and local centres at Level 4 that offer a range of local services including the rural villages of Rathcoole and Newcastle and the urban villages of Palmerstown, Templeogue and Rathfarnham, as well as purpose built centres in Firhouse and Knocklyon. There is also a network of smaller local centres and shops throughout the County.

Retail centres in South Dublin appear to be losing out to other shopping destinations. The 2008 GDA Retail Strategy identifies a significant loss of non-food retail spend to other areas while the adjoining Counties of Fingal, Dun Laoghaire – Rathdown and Dublin City are all net importers. Retail vacancy rates are also higher when compared against centres in adjoining Counties. The outflow of retail spend coupled with high vacancy rates would suggest an underperformance of the County’s retailing sector. This is a cause for concern, as it undermines the social and economic viability of established centres.

Notwithstanding Tallaght’s status as County Town, Metropolitan Consolidation Town and Level 2 Retail Centre, in retail terms the scale and quality of offer does not match that of the main competing centres of Blanchardstown and Dundrum. This is reflected in its more local customer base. With investment there is an opportunity to achieve a successful and dynamic centre. Significant potential remains in Tallaght to build on the existing civic and institutional presence offered by Tallaght Hospital, Institute of Technology, Tallaght and South Dublin County Council. By focusing new investment into Tallaght and ensuring that the town centre grows as an integrated social, cultural and leisure destination, its role as a County Town of regional significance can be realised. To achieve this, it will be important to maintain the vision for Tallaght as a vibrant and sustainable County Town that sits at the top of the County’s settlement and retail hierarchy and to continue to seek to improve Tallaght’s importance in regional shopping terms.

Liffey Valley is a designated Town Centre and a Level 2 Retail Centre in the regional hierarchy. While Liffey Valley functions successfully as a regional shopping centre, the wider mix of uses (residential, social and civic) that would normally characterise a town centre have not emerged. The non-retailing uses that have been developed are predominantly related to its accessible location at a major road junction. The potential for a mixed use town centre appears to be limited due to access constraints and a fragmented local catchment. The future role of Liffey Valley needs to be considered in the context of the County’s settlement and retail hierarchy and may be as a regional shopping centre, with the wider town centre role promoted at more appropriate locations. Given the site’s high accessibility there may be potential for further growth, such as retail warehousing expansion in competition with locations such as Airside and Carrickmines. A key consideration for the Development Plan review will be the role of the Centre and whether the current designation as a Town Centre within the County settlement hierarchy is appropriate.

Clondalkin is a designated Town Centre and Level 3 Retail Centre. Clondalkin is a popular and busy shopping destination with a local catchment. Notwithstanding this, as the third most important retail centre in the County, the floorspace quantum and quality illustrate a significant gap between Clondalkin and adjacent centres. It is struggling to compete with adjoining centres such as Liffey Valley for inward investment and its future role in conjunction with that of Liffey Valley and the emerging centres at Adamstown and Clonburris needs to be considered.

The functionality of a number of Level 3 centres (e.g. Lucan and Rathfarnham in particular) is disjointed with historic village cores offering retail services and newer shopping centres nearby offering convenience and some comparison shopping. To reinforce the traditional centres, the concept of improving linkage or ‘twinning’ the established shopping zones will be investigated.

An examination of the smaller neighbourhood centres (zoned ‘Local Centres’) and their catchment shall take place to identify inconsistencies and opportunities for expansions. In particular, large retail shopping centres at Knocklyon and Rathfarnham have the same status as many local parades of shops, which may not be appropriate.

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2 GDA Retail Strategy, 2008-2012.
3 Vacant Retail and Commercial Service Floor space survey 2009.

4 South Dublin County Retail Study, August 2007.
Questions for Consideration

- In a recovering economy with low consumer expenditure levels what policy mechanisms, if any, could be initiated to ensure the continued viability and vitality of retail centres in the County?

- Given the recent significant growth in retail warehousing provision within the Region – should the next Plan seek to increase retail warehousing provision in South Dublin County?

- How can we optimise the balance of traditional on-street retailing and newer forms of shopping?

- Would a different balance of uses bring more life and animation into the Town Centre’s after daytime hours?

- How can Tallaght re-establish itself as a Centre of Regional Significance?
Transport & Mobility
Transport & Mobility

An efficient and effective transport system is vital for the well-being of both society and the economy. There is a need to be smarter about how we travel and to overcome the negative impacts of increased travel demand. Transport policy in South Dublin County is guided by transport policy at a National and Regional level. These documents acknowledge that current transport trends and levels of car use in particular, are unsustainable. If this continues, congestion will get worse, transport emissions will grow, economic competitiveness will suffer and quality of life will decline.

The national policy document Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Travel Future, (DTTS, 2009) outlines a series of specific transport targets to 2020, coupled with actions to reduce travel demand and improve the transport system. The key targets are:

- Reduction in total share of car commuting to 45%. The share was 59% nationally in 2011 and 56% in South Dublin County. (Census 2011).
- Increase the share of walking, cycling and public transport to achieve a 55% share of all journeys to work, with cycling comprising 10%. The share was 30% nationally in 2011 and 35% in South Dublin County (Census 2011).

Urban areas will need to exceed these targets in order to off-set rural areas where travel distances are further and public transport is not available. Over the last two census periods there has been increases in numbers commuting by bicycle, car passengers and a reduction in car drivers in South Dublin. Numbers on foot and using public transport decreased overall. While positive, the improvements are limited and greater change will be needed in the next plan period (see table below).

There are barriers to more sustainable movement in South Dublin. The street network in many parts of the County is not conducive to walking, due to low levels of connectivity. The cycling network is at an early stage of development and many cycle facilities are incomplete. Many communities are poorly serviced by public transport and the dispersal of employment means that for many, car is the only convenient or practical means of transport to work.

The achievement of a high quality transport system is an ongoing and incremental process that requires ongoing commitment at a national and regional level. The key role at a local level is to work with national agencies to secure and develop major improvements to the transport network and to maximise the capacity of the existing network.

There have been policies in place in South Dublin over the past 10-15 years to integrate land-uses with the aim of reducing travel demand and to focus people intensive activities around existing and planned transport stops so that citizens will have access to an enhanced public transport network. This is a long-term commitment that requires both physical improvements to the public transport network and a change in behaviour. Network improvements to date have been incremental with a number of significant schemes completed and more schemes planned.

At a local level there has been a shift in thinking in relation to easing road congestion and expanding the road network to address traffic ‘hot spots’. It has been observed repeatedly that people are quick to take up the opportunities offered by increased capacity on roads, with the investment often, in effect, creating a new demand for travel. On the local network, proposals that make better use of existing road space by prioritising walking, cycling and public transport are now favoured.

Public attitude and behaviour is a major factor and initiatives that seek to influence travel behaviour are becoming increasingly common. The types of interventions vary but the common underlying principle is to reduce the demand or need for travel and the attractiveness of car based travel, while increasing the attractiveness of more sustainable alternatives. Initiatives such as road tolls, the ‘bike to work’ scheme and carbon taxes, all influence travel decisions.

One of the key challenges for the South Dublin County Development Plan, 2016-2022 will be to present an integrated strategy for transport and mobility that enhances access and movement within and through the County, while promoting change. The strategy will address all types of traffic including pedestrian, cyclist, public transport, private vehicle, economic and employment and through traffic, in addition to car parking. Five key policy themes are emerging:

- Support and guide national agencies in delivering major improvements to the transport network.
- Continue to integrate people intensive land-uses, proximate to existing and planned transport infrastructure.
- Focus on local road and street improvements that better utilise existing road space and promote more sustainable modes of transportation.
- Focus road construction and enhancement on projects that access major residential and economic sites.

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</table>
• The demand for car parking should be managed, with provision based on the land-use and transport characteristics of the area.

All policies will place a major emphasis on changing travel patterns and behaviour with the aim of reducing car dependence in favour of more sustainable movement choices.

### Project Status

#### Network Improvements

- **Leap Card - Integrated Ticketing**: Implemented.
- **Rail**
  - Extension of the red line bus from Baggott to Saggart: Complete.
  - Construction of rail stations at Fairhill Road and Kiskoga: Complete.
  - Dart Underground (also known as the Interconnector) linking Willows Station and the Docklands via St. Stephens Green: Proposed.
  - Light Rail Transit (Metro West) linking Tallaght to the City Centre and Dublin Airport via Metro south: Suspended.
  - Dart Extensions to Lucan to the City Centre (using the Phoenix Park Valley): Subject to further assessment.
  - Opening of the Phoenix Park tunnel for commuter services: Late 2015/early 2016.

#### Bus

- Real-Time Network information: Implemented.
- Swiftway - Bus Rapid Transport (BRT) from Clongriffin to Tallaght (Final route to be determined): Initial Design Phase.

#### Road

- Newlands Cross Upgrade Scheme, including a new flyover: Under Construction. Due to open Spring 2015.
- Upgrade of the N81 from Hollywood to Tallaght: Awaiting funding.
- Regional road upgrades including Adamstown Road and Nangor Road: Awaiting funding.

#### Pedestrian/Cycle

- Greenway Cycle Routes, including Grand Canal, River Dodder, Grand Canal to Mantsdown - Saggart Park: Completion or various stages of construction.
- Cycle Routes, including Walkway to Whitehall Road, Tallaght to Ballyboden/ Templeogue: Various stages of design/construction.
- Local Permeability Projects (including a County review): Completion or various stages of design/ construction.

### Questions for Consideration

- How can strategic coordination and cooperation between the National Transport Authority and the various agencies providing public transport in the County be improved?
- How can the Council promote the benefits of sustainable travel which encourages people to leave their cars at home and to walk, cycle and/or use public transport more?
- Should the Council prioritise investment in the strategic cycle network or concentrate on more localised improvements?
- Should well established residential areas be retrofitted to encourage walking and cycling e.g. actively promoting new physical links and connections between cul-de-sacs?
- Should maximum car parking standards be applied to both residential and non-residential landuses?
- Should the requirement for residential car parking be lower if located in close proximity to public transport corridors? Should car-free developments be encouraged?
Infrastructure

The availability of high quality infrastructure networks and environmental services such as drainage, water supply, electricity and telecommunications networks, will play a key role in securing economic investment, creating sustainable and attractive places, in ensuring health and well-being and in safeguarding the environment. While South Dublin County Council is not directly responsible for all aspects of infrastructure provision, the County Development Plan 2016 – 2022 will inform infrastructure planning for the County.

Water and Drainage

Since January 2014, Irish Water is responsibility for public Water Services in Ireland. Water supplies in the County come from treatment facilities at Ballymore Eustace and Leixlip, with storage reservoirs at Belgard, Peamount, Kiltalown and Saggart. Upgrades to water infrastructure will be informed by regional needs and addressed through Irish Water’s Capital Investment Programmes. While the regional supply and distribution systems are nearing capacity, it is envisaged that efficiencies arising out of domestic metering and reduced leakage will be sufficient to cater for demand up to 2022. In the longer term, an assessment of the regional water needs up to 2050 is ongoing to determine whether a new water source is required.

Waste water collection and treatment infrastructure in the Dublin Region is focused on the Wastewater Treatment Works in Ringsend, which is operating at close to capacity. Irish Water and the Dublin Local Authorities have undertaken to work together to ensure that effective measures are put in place to cater for the projected needs of the City and to meet water quality requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive (2000) and other relevant EU Directives. In the longer term, the need for a new treatment facility in the north of the Region has been identified.

Surface water drainage is primarily the responsibility of South Dublin County Council with the Office of Public Works (OPW) having responsibility for flood risk management. Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Studies (CFRAMS) have been completed by the OPW in conjunction with local authorities for the River Liffey and River Dodder catchments and recommendations of the CFRAMS are currently being implemented. A number of additional CFRAMS schemes have been completed on the Camac, Griffeen and Tobermaclugg rivers, with further works planned.

Waste

Municipal waste collection and disposal has largely been privatised in South Dublin. Local Authorities have moved to a policy making and regulatory role. They are responsible for creating Local Waste Management Plans arising out of the Regional Waste Management Plans and for dealing with instances of illegal disposal of waste in their area.

Telecommunications

National telecommunications infrastructure is provided on a private basis primarily, and is regulated by ComReg. Mobile phone network infrastructure is considered capable of supporting projected growth in the sector; however, broadband infrastructure will require considerable enhancement to extend network coverage and to improve broadband speeds.

The Electricity Transmission System Operator (TSO) is state owned by EirGrid. Bord Gáis, a semi-state company is responsible for the supply, transmission and distribution of natural gas.

The White Paper ‘Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland’ sets out the Government’s Energy Policy Framework 2007-2020 to deliver a sustainable energy future for Ireland. The White Paper identifies reliable, secure and competitively priced electricity supply as vital to the competitiveness of Irish industry and to Ireland’s long-term economic and social development. In the future, the Irish electricity grid will need to meet growing demand and incorporate higher penetration of renewable energy sources.

Questions for consideration

• How can the Council best work with other agencies to ensure infrastructure delivery?
• Are there environmental issues arising out of infrastructure capacity that affect you?
• How can the Council manage development in areas at risk of flooding?
• Is there a trade off between infrastructure delivery and environmental protection?
Green Infrastructure
**Green Infrastructure**

The term Green Infrastructure (GI) describes the interconnected networks of land and water all around us that sustain environmental quality and biodiversity and enrich quality of life. This includes the nature conservation areas, parks, open spaces, gardens, rivers, streams, floodplains, wetlands, woodlands, farmland and mountainous areas which surround and are threaded through villages, towns and urban areas.

South Dublin County has valuable natural resources in its landscapes, rivers, flora and fauna. The County Development Plan presents an opportunity to ensure that these quality features are protected and used in sustainable ways to improve the health and well-being of people in all aspects of their lives.

One of the key benefits of Green Infrastructure is its **multi-functionality**, performing several functions in a single, shared space. GI complements and sometimes replaces, conventional built infrastructure through the use of natural solutions to carry, store, absorb and treat water; it provides for pollination, protects against soil erosion, it alleviates flooding, improves habitats for wildlife, provides ecological corridors, enhances biodiversity, creates jobs, more attractive greener cities and better health and human well-being, amongst many other benefits.

There are a number of key considerations that can inform the review of the County Development Plan and one of the key considerations is the expansion and enhancement of the Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS) in the County. While parks and open spaces in the County perform a significant Green Infrastructure function there is a need to increase the multi-functionality of green spaces and to expand the network to enhance the quality and connectivity of the network. In terms of biodiversity, the EU requires the re-establishment of previously fragmented habitats to ensure the integrity of Natura 2000 European sites. While the County comprises some biodiversity rich areas, there has been significant loss and fragmentation in areas that have undergone significant development. There is an opportunity to consider mechanisms to re-establish and protect habitats.

**Benefits Provided by Green Infrastructure Include:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Provision of clean water</td>
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<td>• Removal of pollutants from air and water</td>
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<td>• Pollination provision</td>
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<td>• Protection against soil erosion</td>
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<td>• Rainwater retention</td>
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<td>• Increased pest control</td>
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<td>• Improvement of land quality</td>
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<td>• Mitigation of land take and soil sealing</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>SOCIAL BENEFIT</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>• Better health and human well-being</td>
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<td>• Creation of jobs</td>
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<td>• Diversification of local economy</td>
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<td>• More attractive, greener cities</td>
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<td>• Higher property values and local distinctiveness</td>
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<td>• More integrated transport and energy solutions</td>
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<td>• Enhanced tourism and recreation opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION BENEFITS</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>• Flood alleviation</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Strengthening ecosystems resilience</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Carbon storage and sequestration</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Mitigation of urban heat island effects</td>
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<td>• Disaster prevention (storms, landslides)</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>BIODIVERSITY BENEFITS</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>• Improved habitats for wildlife</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provision of ecological corridors</td>
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<td>• Landscape permeability</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Reducing habitat fragmentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Providing a buffer against climate change for habitats and species</td>
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Questions for Consideration

- How do we restore biodiversity loss and habitat fragmentation?
- Are there opportunities to extend the County’s existing parks and introduce multi-functionality?
- Should all new proposals for development (ranging from individual housing to industrial developments) be built around Green Infrastructure and link to a wider Green Infrastructure network?
- How can the cost of managing the effects of climate changes be more equally shared?
- Hedgerows are an important GI network – how can they be protected and enhanced?
- How can we realise the full potential of implementation of SUDS within the County?
Heritage, Amenities & Landscape
Heritage, Amenities & Landscapes

Heritage plays an essential role in maintaining a high quality of life throughout the County by way of promoting biodiversity, providing features of interest and contributing to the history, character and identity of areas. Furthermore, heritage is economically important particularly because of the vital role that it plays in promoting tourism at a national, regional and local level.

Ireland is a party to most major international agreements and charters concerned with the protection of heritage, biodiversity and landscapes. Mechanisms for protection of heritage features, landscapes and sites are provided through Planning and Development legislation together with Wildlife, National Monuments and Habitats legislation. The County Development Plan is an important medium that brings the various forms of heritage and landscape protection together.

Built Heritage & Architectural Conservation

South Dublin comprises an amalgamation of the previously industrial villages of Lucan, Palmerstown, Templeogue and Rathfarnham, the once rural villages of Tallaght and Clondalkin and the villages of Newcastle, Rathcoole and Saggart. Most villages are located on the sites of important early Christian ecclesiastical settlements. A vast and varied array of designated built heritage sites, features, structures and places are clustered around the County’s historic villages and are also spread across the County. There is also ample archaeological evidence of prehistoric presence right throughout South Dublin, particularly in the Dublin Mountains.

Most known structures and sites of significant architectural and archaeological importance within the County are protected under Planning and National Monuments Legislation. The County has many structures of local architectural importance that add to the character of its towns, villages, streetscapes, open spaces, urban spaces and rural areas. Some of these items are not designated for protection making them vulnerable to gradual erosion and removal. The review of the County Development Plan is an opportunity to review policy in relation to these locally important structures and features of interest.

Natural Heritage

Designated nature conservation sites located in South Dublin County provide important habitats for flora and fauna and contribute to the overall biodiversity of the wider region. These sites are subject to varying means and levels of protection under Planning and Development legislation and Wildlife and Habitats legislation.

Designated natural habitats within the County are mainly concentrated in rural and mountain areas with the exception of the Dodder Valley proposed National Heritage Area (pNHA), sections of the Grand Canal proposed National Heritage Area and the Liffey Valley Special Amenity Area Order (SAAO). There are three European/Natura 2000 sites in the County, located in the mountain area. This emphasises the need to protect the rural and mountain areas of the County from development that would have a significant affect on the environment either individually or cumulatively. There is also a need to ensure that development within the County does not significantly affect designated sites, especially European/Natura 2000 sites, located outside the County such as the Dublin Bay and the Wicklow Mountains.

Landscapes

Landscapes comprise a dynamic mix of ingredients that respond to natural cycles, weather events, water and climate, and economic factors relating to agriculture, industry, energy, transport, settlement and tourism. The Planning and Development Act, 2000, requires each Development Plan to include objectives for the provision of a framework for identification, assessment, protection, management and planning of landscapes having regard to the European Landscape Convention. There is also a requirement that each Development Plan includes objectives for the preservation of the character of landscapes including views and prospects.

Many aspects of development can significantly impact upon landscapes including views and prospects located within and around rural areas, towns and cities. This creates a challenge in terms of balancing the management of development with the protection of landscapes.

The County Development Plan review presents an opportunity to carry out a revised Landscape Character Assessment for the County that will help frame policy for the sustainable management and development of the County’s Landscapes.

Cultural Heritage

Cultural Heritage can manifest itself in many forms such as; oral traditions and expressions, including language; performing arts; social practices, rituals and festive events; knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; traditional craftsmanship; and traditional sports and outdoor pursuits.

Cultural Heritage therefore plays an important role in society that can help shape and diversify the identity of a County and its places and can contribute to the vitality of an area and quality of life through encouraging activities and events. Cultural heritage can also have an important economic role that encourages tourism and supports the hospitality sector. The review of the County Development presents the opportunity to identify existing and potential cultural heritage throughout the County and to frame policies that promote and manage related activities and events.
Questions for Consideration:

• What are the benefits of maintaining and protecting our protected structures, national monuments, archaeological sites and nature conservation sites?

• Are there uses that you can suggest for protected structures and national monuments in your area?

• Are there additional structures, places and sites that also merit protection and why?

• How do we balance existing and additional development and uses within the County with the protection of our natural and built heritage?

• How do we help ensure that development and uses do not significantly impact upon designated natural habitats within the County and outside the County?

• What are the benefits of acknowledging and promoting cultural heritage and traditions in our County?

• Can you think of traditions and cultural heritage within our County that merit acknowledgment and promotion and, if so, what are they?
Energy

At a European level it is acknowledged that future energy networks should comprise low carbon energy supplies, a range of renewable energy alternatives and greater energy efficiency in the form of smart grids, smart buildings and efficient energy storage.

EU wide energy targets for 2020 seek: a 20% reduction in EU greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels; a 20% increase in share of EU energy consumption produced from renewable resources; and a 20% improvement in the EU’s energy efficiency.

Under the EU Energy Efficiency Directive 2009/28/EC, Ireland has been assigned a legally binding renewable energy target that requires 16% of gross final consumption to comprise of renewable energy sources by 2020, across the electricity, heat and transport sectors. These energy targets have been translated into the National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP) 2010 and the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP) 2013-2020. Under the NREAP, Ireland plans to achieve the binding EU 2020 targets by delivering approximately 40% of energy consumption from renewable sources in the electricity sector, 12% in the heat sector and 10% in the transport sector.

South Dublin County Council signed up to the EU Covenant of Mayors in June 2012. The Covenant of Mayors is an initiative of the European Commission that brings together Mayors from across Europe, in a shared voluntary commitment to reducing CO2 emissions by a minimum target of 20% by 2020. In South Dublin this is based on 2006 levels.

To cater for growth across all sectors, South Dublin County will require a reliable, robust and efficient energy system. The County should aspire to becoming as carbon neutral as possible and make every effort to increase energy efficiency and unlock renewable energy potential. To further build capacity and to increase the deployment of energy efficiency measures and renewable energy technologies, there is a recognised need to focus on more evidence based and spatially appropriate energy policy. In response to this need, it is proposed to develop an Energy Strategy for South Dublin County, as part of the County Development Plan review process.

Questions for Consideration:

- What kind of policies should the Plan contain which would change our habits so as to reduce carbon emissions and/or adapt to changes in our climate?
- How do we become more energy efficient?
- How can spatial planning contribute to more efficient energy usage?
- What are the opportunities for renewable energy generation in South Dublin County?
Environmental Assessments & Climate Change

In order to fully incorporate environmental considerations into the plan making process, the Council will carry out a number of environmental assessments in parallel with the plan process. These assessments are Strategic Environmental Assessment, Appropriate Assessment and Flood Risk Assessment.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
Strategic Environmental Assessment is a statutory formal process, concerned with the environmental impacts of implementing the County Development Plan. It is a process that aims to ensure that any potential for significant environmental effects are identified, considered and taken into account prior to the adoption of the plan. It is a separate parallel process carried out in tandem with the preparation of the Development Plan.

Appropriate Assessment (AA)
The EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) aims to create a network of protected wildlife sites in Europe through the designation of Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas, collectively known as Natura 2000 sites. South Dublin currently has three of these sites. It is a requirement of the Directive and legislation to carry out an Appropriate Assessment (Natura Impact Report) on any plan or project that is likely to have a significant effect on the conservation status of a site. The draft County Development Plan will have to be screened to ascertain whether it would be likely to have any significant impact on any Natura 2000 site. Whilst the AA is a statutory separate process to the SEA, it is, in fact, a parallel process and as such the outcomes of the AA will feed into and inform the SEA process outlined above.

Flood Risk Management
The EU Floods Directive and the “Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities” (Department of the Environment and Local Government/Office of Public Works, 2009) set out the requirement for a development plan to be accompanied by a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. These Guidelines state that inappropriate development that cannot meet the criteria for a Justification Test should not be considered at the plan-making stage. The Council will carry out a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment of the policies and objectives of the Draft County Development Plan. This assessment will provide a broad assessment of flood risk within the County and inform strategic land-use planning decisions.

Climate Change
In line with global trends, Ireland’s climate is changing and scientific consensus is that more changes are on the way. It is accepted that action is required to manage and deal with climate change impacts. There is a need to adapt to these changes.

In December 2012 the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (DOECLG) published the “National Climate Change Adaptation Framework”. The DOECLG has been identified as the lead body on National Adaptation policy. Local Authorities have, however, been given the role to prepare local adaptation plans through the Development Plan process. Adaptation involves changing our own habits so as to adapt to the challenges of climate change. Climate change adaptation is an overarching consideration that will inform policies and objectives throughout the plan review process, with increased emphasis on reducing climate change at a local level through settlement and travel patterns, energy use and protection of Green Infrastructure.

Questions for Consideration
• What do you think are the important environmental issues in the County?
• Has the environment in South Dublin changed as a result of development? If so how?
• Are there any particular environmental objectives, which you would like to see the new County Development Plan measured against?
• How can the Appropriate Assessment process safeguard environmental resources associated with Natura 2000 sites?
• How can the County Development Plan best address the challenges of climate change?
• What kind of policies should the Plan contain which would change our habits so as to reduce carbon emissions and/or adapt to changes in our climate?
NOW WE'D LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU...

Submissions and observations are invited over an eight week period from 5th September 2014 to 16.00 hours on 31st October 2014, online at www.southdublindevplan.ie or in writing to the address below.

On Line:
www.southdublindevplan.ie

Postal:
Senior Executive Officer,
Land Use Planning and Transportation Department,
South Dublin County Council,
County Hall, Tallaght,
Dublin 24.

For further information log onto www.southdublindevplan.ie or call the County Development Plan Review Team on 01 4149000

A Vision for South Dublin’s Future