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Comhairliúchán:

Draft Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028

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Ballyvolane, District Centre and Urban Expansion Area, Glen River Park

Caibidil: Volume 1 - Written Statement» 2. Core Strategy

Ábhair: Long term planning

Cork City Council has a huge opportunity in Ballyvolane Urban Expansion Area (UEA), to ensure that development conforms to all of the strategic objectives laid out in both the city development plan and the Cobh and Municipal District Area Plan. With up to 3,600 new homes planned for the area, this is a real chance to use international best practice on new housing to achieve the strategic objectives around liveability, cycling and walking, green and blue spaces and the 15 minute city.

Unfortunately the first section of the development, which as already been granted planning, fails on many of the objectives contained within both the Local Area Plan and the City Development Plan. An Bord Pleanála's remarks (2019) mentions issues around the expansion being predicated on the Northern Distributor road being built, lack of cycling and walking infrastructure, lack of clarity around whether the road through the development is in the correct place and lack of access/routes to green space.

The development is also walled all around creating the very 'island development' that the city claims to want to avoid, with the footpath on the outside of the development next to what will be a busy and fast road. Why will this not be a foot and cycle path protected by planting?

From the LAP

- Promote permeability within the area and relationship to and linkages with the wider area;
- Proposals for the creation and treatment of public realm and open space within the area having regard to the topography of the area, in particular the visually prominent ridgeline to the north;

The Ballyvolane site is located within the City Harbour and Estuary Landscape type as defined by the Draft Landscape Strategy which is considered very high in terms of sensitivity and value.

3.4.82 The key principles in considering sustainable development on the site are as follows:--

- Ensure that the proposed development provides effective connectivity (walking and cycling) to the town centre, educational and employment centres for the future residents;

The opportunity exists here for Cork City Council to create a world class extension to the city by dictating in advance the shape of the development and its connection to the city.

Mapping Infrastructure before Housing

Cork City Council has an incredible opportunity in Ballyvolane to decide in advance of any houses being built, what and where infrastructure is needed. For the Urban Expansion Area Cork City Council should map in advance

All protected cycle lanes and footpaths

All roads and bus stops through the developments

All natural flood mitigation including planting/pocket forests/swales

All access to and boundaries around the 35 hectare designated green space(LAP) Particularly linking this green space to the district centre.

All road frontage

This allows the council rather than developers to design the city according to the strategic objectives laid out in the City Development plan. Many other cities undergoing periods of expansion have successfully mapped out their cities in advance allowing building only where it is designated.

Designing this in advance will ensure key strategic objectives like permeability, 15 minute city, increased walking and cycling, increased public transport use, and balancing density with green space.

Flood Management and Run Off

Ballyvolane has a well known problem with run off flooding from the UEA area. It stands to reason that building on land which already has a problem retaining water will only cause more flooding down the line. We saw a large number of flash flooding events this year due almost certainly to climate change and so we should question our reliance on the 1 in 100 year event metric.

Mapping infrastructure before housing allows for natural flood defences to be put in place before any planning is even submitted for development. For example

The LAP has identified small watercourses which could be useful for channelling run off and these could be incorporated into the design of the area achieving yet another strategic objective of utilising our current green/blue infrastructure.

Pocket forests or tree planting could be commenced in order to create a bank of well established semi mature trees.

Planting can be commenced to create protected foot and cycle paths

A biodiversity corridor can be created retaining existing hedgerows leading to the 35 hectare green space at the top of the ridge.

Swales can be incorporated into public amenity green space

Creating a District Centre

Ballyvolane lacks a coherent village centre and a place where people can gather. Dunnes and Lidl while important retail centers, do not provide a sense of place as outlined in SO. For the development of the liveability of the area, and to achieve the strategic objectives of the 15 minute city and placemaking, the area around the Fox and Hounds should be focused on as the 'district centre' and upgraded accordingly.

The Fox and Hounds pub and adjacent buildings including the stone building added to the protected buildings register. These are the only turn of the century buildings in this area, occupy a prominent place at a crossroads and are a local landmark.



Creation of town plaza at the rear of the Fox and Hounds to include public seating and access to the Upper Glen River Park

Pedestrian and cycle links from existing and planned housing developments to allow easy access.

'Meanwhile use' of all the unused space in the building behind the Fox and Hounds pub (some of which has never been in use since the building was built).

Roads and Junctions/Public Transport/Park and Ride

Currently the proposed route of the Northern Distributor Road bisects the UEA and runs through the area designated as high landscape value/open space. It is described as a road which will enable a HGV ban in the city centre which means the plan is to have HGVs routed through the middle of a housing estate. This completely contravenes the claimed strategic objectives for new housing developments.

I would urge the council to visit areas where large roads have been developed through residential areas – for example in the Santry/Glasnevin/St Margaret's Road area of Dublin. Here islands of development are separated by large, busy roads and retail parks surrounded by large car parks. It is dystopian in scale and seems in no way to have considered the humans that live there.

The junction at the Fox and Hounds pub is already wide and difficult to navigate as a pedestrian and so should not be increased in size.

The area of trees/planting at this junction should be retained as 1. a green amenity space (a bench would be good) and 2. run off mitigation

A Park and Ride facility is desperately needed on the north side of the city.

The bus timetable has been reduced from 3 times per hour to 2 times per hour. It is often late, and sometimes leaves early which is worse. The strategic objective of increasing public transport will not happen if there is not a sufficiently frequent and reliable service.

A bus route linking northside suburbs should be considered.

Cycling Infrastructure

The North Ring Road and Ballyhooly Road should have protected bike lanes. There is a disgraceful lack of cycling infrastructure on the north side with topography often quoted as the main issue, however whole sections of the area around Ballyvolane/Mayfield are flat. Cycle paths linking schools, shops and homes should be a priority.

Glen River Park

This park is a biodiversity oasis in the city and should be preserved as such and not 'developed' with the use of hard landscaping or cycle paths. As the park has been earmarked for development/funding this should take place in the form of

Designation as a Natura Site including the upper extension of the site.

Upper site made accessible to the public

Site managed as a wild area within the city and not treated as a manicured park

No use of glyphosphates or any other substances harmful to the ecosystem

Training for all city parks staff in the management of nature reserves

Education packs/tours/poster boards etc to teach people about the wealth of species found here

The previous development plan indicated that the upper section of the Glen River Park would be opened up as an amenity area but no progress has been made to date.

What should definitely not be done is create a hard thoroughfare through the park which would encourage inappropriate speeds. Cyclists can use the park as it is without the need for further cycle paths within the park.

Ultimately the plan should be to create a biodiversity corridor from the lower to upper glen and across and up to the designated open space in the Ballyvolane UEA.

Documents Attached: Níl