

Magazine Rd & Surrounding Areas Residents Association
Submission on Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028

In the interest of an age friendly, child friendly and family friendly sustainable community.

Delivering Homes and Successful Neighbourhoods

As citizens we welcome the new City Development Plan (CDP) and again wish to express our interest in engaging in the extensive consultation process proposed by Cork City Council (CCC).

For the CDP to be relevant and effective to many of the residents in the South West and South Central Wards, it must show clear strategies and address the following concerns of the permanent residential community. Having read through the Draft Plan, we see initiatives to regenerate areas, but nothing specific to support, sustain and stop the decline of existing struggling neighbourhoods. It appears to be full of sideline strategies but with very little commitment to this area.

In the interest of maintaining a sustainable living neighbourhood, we are requesting that the area of approx 2sq.Km around UCC be given its own strategic area action plan and a revitalisation plan to halt the decline of our neighbourhood (see attached map and also photographs). Many of the residential streets are now 90%-100% devoid of long term residents. The area must be given its own unique identity(eg. Old City Residential Quarter etc) to attract young couples and families into the area and more importantly to assist in retaining the existing community.

Placemaking - Permanent signage with the name of the area should also be erected throughout the entire area along with an emphasis on ONE COMMUNITY - RESPECT as the main theme.

Houses of Multiple Occupancy(HMOs).

The CDP states that *“understanding the nature and mix of households that form neighbourhoods is an important starting point in planning for the future development of more liveable neighbourhoods.”*

The nature and mix of households in the area around UCC in particular has exceeded its tipping point in terms of the ratio of private rental properties (or Houses of Multiple Occupancy - HMOs), to owner/occupied properties, with some roads completely devoid of residents. From 2017 to 2021 – just four years – the number of unregistered rental properties in the area soared from 135 to 240. This is indicative of the rate of property acquisition by commercial interests increasingly dominating the community profile and thereby magnifying the issues of concern. The CDP must include plans to correct this imbalance.

The CDP references statistics in relation to the type and extent of rental properties on the market in the city – the source of these statistics are unclear. If data provided by the Residents Tenancy Board (RTB) informs any of these statistics then due consideration should be given by the proposal developers to the accuracy and validity of that data as community research has identified a significant variance between the number of properties registered with the RTB versus the actual number of rental properties active in the market.

In the main, private rentals (HMOs) are managed individually by landlords themselves or increasingly through management companies. There is significant variance in the standards of property maintenance and tenancy management. Additionally the conversion of any existing family residence to a House of Multiple Occupancy is not currently subject to any planning permission.

Deterioration in this area has accelerated notably in recent years as the ratio of ‘lived in’ homes versus short-term lets continues to decline. Multiple properties are being acquired by companies and individuals with commercial interests who can out-bid interested families. On acquiring the property they then gut it to maximise occupancy potential. Some of these properties are listed with protected features that cynical business interests ignore and take no steps to protect or preserve. The CPD must set out proposals to address these circumstances.

The net effect of this situation is the active degeneration of a community and the creation of an increasingly **Unliveable** City Neighbourhood.

College Road' – an address that at one time would have been very desirable is now a byword for social chaos and the practical definition of such an **Unliveable** City Neighbourhood – the antithesis of that promoted by the CPD. No landlord should be allowed to treat our area and our City with such disrespect (see photos) Photos show College Road(now almost 100% denuded of residents), one minute from the gateway to UCC and the main thoroughfare to the 5*Hayfield Manor Hotel, the BonsSecours hospital and our homes.

If the community demographic becomes saturated and dominated by a single stakeholder profile, particularly one that is untethered to the community and transient, then a social context is created in which all social stakeholders suffer, businesses, schools and particularly the community culture including the 15-min City.

The CPD needs to address these concerns directly and articulate the practical measures to be taken in addressing or mitigating the impact of the issues identified in this submission.

The City needs a plan to deal with the thousands of HMOs in Cork City which have an annual income of approximately €40,000 per annum with no planning permission or licences required in converting a residential property into a HMO, contrary to the UK and N.I. where legislation and licensing by local authorities have been in place for the last 30yrs.

While the Draft Development Plan does refer to PBSAs as the future for student accommodation, it makes no reference whatsoever to HMOs. The building of PBSAs alone will not return HMOs to residential use. These HMOs make up the primary accommodation for students(9,000 beds), yet there is no reference in the Draft Plan on the maintenance, management, standards, monitoring and control of this area.

In the interest of living and sustainable communities, the Cork City Development Plan must address the negative impact of HMOs on neighbourhoods with some streets completely denuded of any permanent residents. HMOs on average houses 8/10 students in former 2/3 bedroom family homes. At a minimum planning must be required for change of use. These HMOs are a major source in creating environmental and the much reported antisocial behaviour problems. We need specific action measures in this Development Plan to halt this trend in the interest of sustaining an already established community.

The Plan must include policy changes including the passing of bye-laws to its planning regulation to prevent the conversion of private residential properties into HMOs, which is resulting in the destruction of a residential community in an already 10/15-minute city.

The Plan must show how it is going to enforce its policies on the maintenance and upkeep of these HMOs including the licensing of landlords.

PBSAs.

As a residents group we made a submission on the proposed Variation No.5 (Student Accommodation) in May 2018. However, we are unsure if that submission ever progressed to the Development Plan - only ref. we could see was to the National Strategy Draft Plan is page 80/3.43.

The impact of PBSAs in this area is not addressed within the Draft Plan. With over 2,500 beds in PBSAs built in a 1 to 2sq.Km radius close to residential homes along with 80%-90% HMOs already existing in many streets(see map - pink are HMOs, blue are PBSAs), plans must be put in place to arrest the death of the permanent residential community around UCC in the interest of a Sustainable Community and 15-Minute City. Any PBSA development should be seen as an opportunity to improve the public realm and expansion of public amenity of an area. However, we have seen no evidence of these improvements contrary to the Cork Development Plan 2015-21.

Page 80 3.42 of the Draft Plan states that:

PBSAs should provide adequate functional living space and layout for the occupants, including shared communal external space, communal spaces. The design of the development must be high quality and in accordance with the requirements of standards set out in Chapter 11- Placemaking and Managing Development.

None of this is evident in PBSAs in our area eg. Denroches Cross, Crows Nest, Western Rd, South Main St. We believe these developments should have clearly shown a ratio of amenities(including outdoor) space based on occupancy availability in order to ensure residential amenity and placemaking. It is also our experience that these development plans have many guidelines and strategies on visual impact building heights. Yet in recent developments in our area, these guidelines were not implemented and have resulted in a negative impact on our community, this is despite residents having engaged at every level with the planning process. This must be addressed in the New Development Plan. It is our experience that while this section of the City Development Plan is visionary, for us that vision is not reflected and did not materialise in a positive way with PBSA developments in recent years, where we saw all these requirements within our City Development Plan being ignored by developers, planning authorities inc. An Bord Pleanala. There appears to be no limit on the number of PBSA developments taking place in this particular area and the effect they have on

permanent residents, This must be addressed in the interest of Placemaking and Public Amenity.

Impact Statement:

The Cork City Development Plan 2022-28 must indicate how it is going to encourage families and young couples to reside in this 15-minute city area. With all the requirements for this 15-minute city already in place (schools, hospitals, shops, recreation areas and place of worship etc.), the community is in decline due to inaction by City Council. Cork city, and particularly this areas, is host to two long-established centres of third level education – MTU and UCC.

In recent years the expansion of both institutions identified, both physically in terms of premises - and demographically in terms of student population, has had a significant impact on all aspects of life in local communities.

The Plan must show how it is going to deal with this ever increasing student population. 40,000 students now attend UCC & MTU, with the majority living within a 2-3 sq.km of UCC. The UCC student population has increased from 7,000/8,000 thousand to 22,000 in just over 5 years, yet there has never been an impact study carried out on the effect this increase has had on the permanent residential community. This impact study should proceed before any final draft in the interest of community engagement and sustainable planning process.

The Cork City Development Plan must include a policy on engaging with UCC & MTU on the ever increasing expansion of their institutions. With development at UCC on its current campus almost at maximum, alternative sites must be identified off campus for any further expansion in the interest of Sustainable Community and Public Transport policy.

The Plan must show clear strategies on how it is going to implement and ensure an age friendly, family friendly and child friendly sustainable community in this area and where permanent residents can live in harmony with the transient student population. It must show how it will support diversity and plan for the needs of that community.

Area of Architectural Conservation

We support the protection and preservation of gardens and front wall railings of houses in the area in the interest of Placemaking, Public Amenities and Architectural Conservation. Given that residents comply and support the protection of these front gardens and railings, it does limit the availability of off street parking. Parking permits should only be available to residents and long term tenants staying in properties registered with the RTB in the interest of Place Making, Public Amenity, Sustainability and Traffic Management.


The Plan must include specific actions on how this residential area is going to be sustained and regenerated. Much of the Draft Plan is aspirational with no specifics and does not appear to include any specific reference to the regeneration and sustainability of this residential area. This despite residents meeting with the Chief Executive and her Management team on two occasions over the past three years, where all issues pertaining to the area were discussed.

If the authorities with responsibility for fulfilling their duties to their citizens fail to demonstrate the appetite necessary to realise and implement such measures, to restore the civil liberties and entitlements of an entire community, then the aims and aspirational declarations set out in the CPD will be greatly compromised in their realisation and the worth of the plan itself greatly devalued.

All of the above must be addressed in the Cork City Development Plan 2022-28, if is not to be seen by the undersigned residents as a plan full of sideline strategies with very little commitment.

Trusting that our submission be given full consideration. If further information is required, please do not hesitate to contact either myself Aidan or Chairperson, Catherine Clancy.


Aidan Cahill
 Secretary 29/9/21


Catherine Clancy
 Chairperson 29/Sept/2021

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