

cork city development Plan
public consultation

cork city

04/10/2021

www.anois.org



Introduction

The World is changing at a rapid speed with massive uncertainties in global economics, geo-politics and the natural environment. Challenges being faced by cities include COVID-19, population growth, growing inequality, changing demographics, ageing population, resource depletion, resource scarcity, over consumption, deforestation, increased cost of living, waste and pollution, climate change, natural disasters, Brexit and an increase in urbanisation, amongst others. It is estimated that by 2050, 60 percent of the world's population will be living in urban areas. Cork needs to prepare for the future now, through designing it to satisfy the fundamental needs of all Corkonians.

We warmly welcome the Cork City Council consultation document and the positive principles outlined. This document builds on the consultation document, highlighting some significant gaps as well as other vital key considerations for a resilient and vibrant 21st international liveable city for all.

Cork is a live project, a living lab that will continue to grow and evolve. We need to treat it accordingly, being flexible and adaptable with our plans and actions, while sticking to the core foundational principles outlined in the consultation document and in the following pages. that ensures the wellbeing, health and happiness of current and future generations. Cork has had a unique and chequered past which has resulted in some wonderful history, heritage and culture.

Now is the time to act before it's too late and we lose too much, economically, socially, culturally and ecologically.

Vision

There is no clear vision for Cork city. Far from a rebellious city, Cork now stands as a city with no clear ambition or direction.



We need a vision that is **people focussed**, prioritising public life and the public realm over private interests. A vision that leads to a liveable, healthy, safe, attractive, sustainable, equal, inclusive and affordable environment for all citizens and not just the fortunate few



The vision should be of a **15 minute walking city**, where irrespective of ones location within the city fundamental amenities, recreational and natural facilities essential for health, well-being and culture for, can be accessed by foot or equivalent, e.g. playgrounds, parks, seating, health services, education, food supplies etc.



This vision should treat Cork as a **living, breathing entity**, e.g. rooftop food production, renewable energy harvesting, city-wide orchards, multi-sensory experiences



This vision should include reopening and cleaning the **city waterways** and restoring our cultural and natural heritage, combined with bring enormous wellbeing and financial benefits



The vision should include turning the central islands and surrounding central neighbourhoods into **car-free zones**, supported by equitable public transport and inclusive mobility routeways

Social Contract

We need a new Social Contract in Cork. The current one is broken. This is clear when you walk around the city and witness first-hand the dereliction, homelessness, high vacancy, inadequate public realm and access to waterways, pollution and car dominated environments. Cork City Council needs to urgently fix the social contract and lead by example, establish moral and political rules of behaviour and bring all Corkonians with it on this vital journey. 100% transparency in decision making will provide crucial for vitalising a sense of place with equality at its core.

General Citizen Assembly

To start this process for change we propose the council establishes a General Citizen Assembly to address the city development plans, vision, strategy and roadmap.

Legacy

Finally, we need to decide what really matters for Cork, who we are as a city and what do we want our legacy to be. The Cork City Council consultation document is saying many of the right things, the test is what happens in practice, how will it be enacted. We have seen successive consultation documents and strategies not delivering on their promises in Cork. It is absolutely crucial that this consultation document is realised and the cities massive potential is achieved.



City Charters / Manifestos

1. A **Design DNA Manifesto** for buildings and space. Every city has its unique character, its buildings and space that contribute most to its sense of identity, one could argue this is the city DNA. This DNA should be reflected in a set of design principles that are incorporated into the planning process. For Cork these should include the historic design principles instilled in the historical Cork built environment such as human scale (e.g. max 6 story height), harmony, balance, golden ratio, sustainability, aesthetic, timelessness, classic, durability, circularity, climate resilient, adaptability and regenerative applying materials and finishes that are fit for purpose and reflect the native Cork limestone and red sandstone
2. A **Manifesto for Urban/City Scale Manufacturing and Making** which focuses on the local economy, responsible entrepreneurship, underpinned by sustainable design and circularity
3. A Manifesto for a **Local, Circular, Foundational, Sharing and Collaborative Economy**
4. A **Meanwhile Use Charter** for all buildings, irrespective of ownership
5. A **Common Heritage Charter** (this can be based on the Declaration of Amsterdam 1975)
6. A **Play Charter**, putting free and inclusive fun, games, arts and culture at the heart of the city
7. **Climate Neutral Charter**, going beyond climate reliance with the goal of achievement by 2035. This charter need to view and position climate change beyond the localised weather impacts and anticipate systematic changes that will forced upon Cork especially the anticipated decline in global economy activities.

Costing & Monitoring

All of this work needs to be underpinned by a set of **Key Performance Indicators** that prioritise well-being, happiness over unsustainable economic growth linking to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. These indicators should be supported by a **True Costing Model**, that rethinks the current compromise mindset, presenting costs that reflect the wider societal situation, sustainability and true Corkonian needs.

We are not the first city on this journey, we can draw on so many wonderful **International Best Practice** examples from across the World, whether that is how to enhance the liveability, restore and maximise our waterways, or maintain a structural and aesthetic integrity through strict design principles for the older city, maximising its cultural heritage value while ensuring its inclusivity for all people. We can look to and learn from success stories like Copenhagen and Amsterdam. The answers are there. We just need to look to them and of course tailor to our precise needs. We did it before, we can do it again.

Cork City Council Practice & Culture

In enacting all of this Cork City Council need to radically change City Council Practice and their Culture. They should:

- advocate for **Devolution of Power, Influence and Finance** to the city from central government
- only **Invest Ethically** and for long term benefits
- only support Sustainable and Circular Innovation
- enact **Sustainable Public Procurement**, use all of the public purse to stimulate the local economy
- ensure they **Responsibly Manage All Land Use** in a manner that abides with the social contract, fitting with a city for all, ideally achieving regeneration without over-gentrification
- ensure **Leadership By Example**, embracing and facilitating change, overcoming cultural, economic and privatisation barriers

Critical Urgent Cost-Effective Actions

- Halt all flood defence plans for River Lee & River Bride/Kiln and install a best practice tidal barrier, natural flood plains and regular maintenance/clearing of debris from rivers, an investment for this and future generations, which will ensure Cork can maximise its heritage and cultural value, celebrate and utilise its waterways and ensure Cork is the city of choice for all modern day tourists
- Rapidly increase trees, green spaces, pedestrianisation, cycle lanes, buses, park and ride, public seating, public bins, public toilets, public realm maintenance and parking enforcement
- Enforce CPOs and update the dereliction list to reflect the level of decay in the built environment
- Open up all council owned buildings and sites for use (meanwhile)
- Spend full budgets for Traveller accommodation and increase social and affordable housing
- Be a rebellious city and ban demolition of any building 100+ years old, high rise development in historic areas (max 6 to 8 stories), the sale of public land, co-living accommodation, student accommodation in city centre, facadism, on-street parking, pesticides and herbicides, and urban sprawl.
- Legal obligation for all property owners to secure the structural and façade integrity of their buildings, and for all landlords to greatly improve the quality and efficiency of their properties



anois is a global design agency creating value through design for sustainability and the circular economy. Having successfully worked in most industrial sectors anois has proven expertise and experience in the co-creation of responsible brands, products, packaging, business models, policies and strategies. anois provides specialist training and development and capacity building programmes, stakeholder engagement, consultations, horizon scanning, forecasting and communications. The anois team have worked across Asia, Africa, Europe and Americas with recent clients include large and small companies, the European Commission, United Nations Industrial Development Organisation, national governments, industry associations and higher educational institutes. Our network-based structure enables us to bring the right people together, with the right attitude, at the right time, for the right result. All projects are carefully tailored towards the precise needs of our clients, and under pinned by research, analysis and synthesis.

This response is designed for digital viewing only, please contact us if you require a print friendly version.

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1. Beyond Words

The World is changing at a rapid speed with massive uncertainties in global economics, geo-politics, and the natural environment. Challenges being faced by cities include COVID-19, population growth, growing inequality, changing demographics, ageing population, resource depletion, resource scarcity, over consumption, deforestation, increased cost of living, waste and pollution, climate change, natural disasters, Brexit and an increase in urbanisation, amongst others. It is estimated that by 2050, 60 percent of the world's population will be living in urban areas. Cork needs to prepare for the future NOW, through designing it to satisfy the fundamental needs of all Corkonians.

We welcome the progressive wording and terminology of the (City Development Plans) CDP. However, we are concerned the laudable ambitions will not materialise if the development plan does not adhere to best practice. In 2021 with a Climate Crisis, Biodiversity Crisis and Resource Crisis unfolding before us, we have moved beyond the time for words. We need action NOW, before it's too late.

2. Reliability

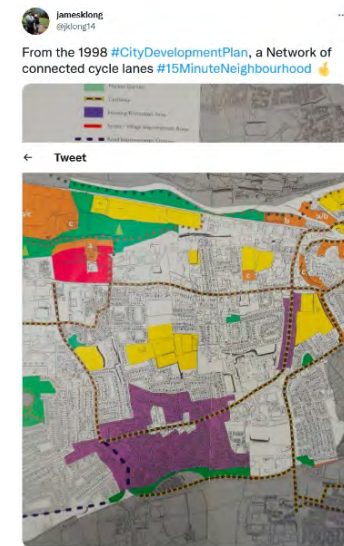
We can only progress when we learn from what's happened in the past. There have been numerous CDPs all with high ambitions. For instance, this cycle network plan from 1998 still has to be delivered. A review of the current CPD 2015-21 has not been provided, yet there are many outstanding objectives not delivered. For instance, there were promises that Shandon would be a cultural quarter with the Butter Exchange returning as a craft centre, this has not transpired and has been dropped from the Draft CPD with no explanation provided. This lack of review and

evaluation and repeated failure to deliver on promises made within a CDP greatly reduces citizens' confidence in the value of the CPD, thus reducing the amount of time they are willing to spend providing input and feedback on the CDP.

3. Social Contract

We need a new Social Contract in Cork. The current one is broken. This is clear when you walk around the city and witness firsthand the dereliction, homelessness, high vacancy, inadequate public realm, poor access to waterways, high pollution levels and car-dominated environments. Cork City Council needs to urgently fix the social contract and lead by example, establish moral and political rules of behaviour and bring all Corkonians with it on this vital journey. 100% transparency in decision making will provide crucial for vitalising a sense of place with equality at its core.

If the CPD sets the future path for all its citizens, all its citizens should be engaged. There has been no free public meetings (in-person or online) and insufficient awareness raising. To add to this the draft CPD is not accessible to the city's citizens. It contains an excessive amount of paperwork for citizens to trawl through, making it daunting and too time consuming for any citizen to be expected to spend their precious time trying to decipher proposed actions from lots of nice sounding rhetoric. The large amount of documents and reports will deter even the most engaged of citizens.



1,180 pages

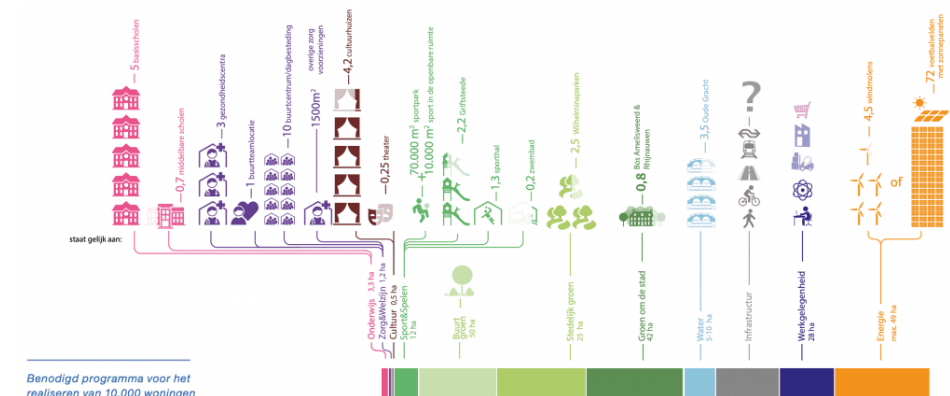
4. SMART objectives

i Specific

The objectives proposed too generic and do not clearly define actions that will be taken or tangible outcomes we can expect to see as a result of this plan. For instances, many of the objective contain vague phrases like 'will aim to' 'will support' 'will promote' 'will encourage' 'to develop in a manner' 'will investigate' 'will evaluate' 'will assess' 'will seek to address'.

All objectives should be assigned with quantifiable targets, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). It is not possible to manage what you do without measurement and it is impossible to create a realistic and achievable plan without targets. KPIs are needed to understand where you are, set objectives for going forward, monitor and evaluate, and adjust as needed. KPIs should be assigned quantifiable targets in order to determine progress and success.

Below is an example of how Utrecht track their progress on providing essential services to citizens. It maps out how many school, health, and sports facilities, cultural versus, sports, green and blue infrastructure, shops and renewable energy per 10,000 homes.



iii Achievable

To understand if an objective is achievable, not only does it need KPIs but it needs to be allocated to the relevant responsible department, a committed budget assigned and additional outlined. It also requires a realistic risk management plan put in place. None of the objectives outlined contain this information, and therefore raises further questions on how achievable they are. We request that the council provides transparency on how the CPD will be funded and implemented.

iv Relevant

Clarity needs to be provided on which objectives are within the remit of Cork City Council and which ones lie at a national governance level. For instance, where can Cork City Council bring in bylaws and targeted actions to progress the CPD beyond Ireland's horrendous European track record on climate, biodiversity and circularity.

v Time Based

As there are no timelines, timeframes or deadlines contained with the CPD. This is not best practice and it significantly reduces its ability to achieve its objectives. This lack of deadlines will most likely result in objective creep, where promised changes are pushed further and further out of scope until they are forgotten and eventually dropped (see point 2 above.) Cork has seen this happen too many times already. The CPD needs to provide a 5 year timeline of the planned actions to enable sufficient assessment of where and when the plan will achieve its objectives. This should include a detailed plan for each year, set out in advance with an allocation of budget provided in advance. Leaving detailed planning to a year by year basis will lead to substandard delivery,

insufficient prioritisation, hindering engagement as well as the ability for partners and stakeholder to support the plan effectively. The CPD needs to include a delivery date for each action with KPIs broken down per year for each action.

The lack of time-based objectives hinders both the councils and citizens in tracking progress of the CPD. It will be impossible for Cork City Council to effectively manage, track, monitor and evaluate delivery of the CPD, which will result in higher costs for taxpayers. A schedule of reviews, feedback loops and related public consultations should be provided, which should include an allocation of the required resources to Cork City Council to effectively support such a schedule. Without committed timelines it is unclear how the council will ensure the CPD is implemented. This is a grave concern.

5. 15 minute City

We welcome the ambitions to be a 15 minute city. As a small city, Cork City is an ideal size and was originally a 15 minute city. However, ensuring all essential services are within 15 minute walking, cycling or public transport will require a radical shift in how the majority of citizens currently travel.

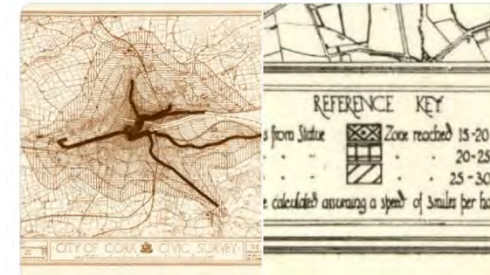
For this Strategic Objective to be supported, realistic and achievable clarity needs to be provided on

- What needs are considered essential
- How many citizens will live within this 15 minute city and 5 minute neighbourhoods
- What is the breakdown between essential needs accessed within 5 or 15 minute walking, cycling or public transport
- How is accessibility by public transport assessed, e.g. availability per hour etc.
- By what year Cork will achieve a 15 minute city status

¹ https://www.nationaltransport.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/National_Household_Travel_Survey_2017_Report_-_December_2018.pdf



15 minute city concept from the Cork Civic Survey 1926 , zones reached from the statue by walking and tram. corkpastandpresent.ie/history/batch1...
[#sustainablemobility](#) [#CityDevelopmentPlan](#)



Currently the Transport Modes targets will not create a 15 minute city, since walking rates of 21% will not be changing, and cycling rates will only increase to 4%. Likewise targeting 49% of trips by car does not represent a 15 minute city. Since most trips in Ireland are less than 5km¹ there is huge potential to reduce our emission by making sure 90% of those short trips are by active transport (walking and cycling). Cork Cycling Campaign “suggest from our calculations that a general Cork City target mode share of between 13% and 20% by 2028 is achievable, based on the current growth trajectory.”² We are calling on Cork City Council to pursue cycling rates of 20% and walking rates of 45% by 2028. These should be minimum levels.

“15-minute cities are built from a series of **5-minute neighbourhoods**, also known as **complete communities** or **walkable neighbourhoods**”³

² <https://corkcyclingcampaign.com/cork-city-development-plan-2022/>

³ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S2214140518305103>

There is no mention in the CPD of creating 5-minute walkable neighbourhoods. This objective combined with no increase in walking rates would indicate Cork City Council are not serious about implementing a realistic 15 minute city.

The fastest and cheapest way to increase Cork City's walking and cycling rates is to reduce all speed limits to 30km across the city, while reduce the national roads, south and north links to 50km within the city urban footprint. This will be aided by the creation of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods to reduce rat runs and through traffic. The map of widespread 30km speed limits in Amsterdam is provided for information.



"Two thirds of the 110,000 vehicles entering the city centre every day are using it as a 'through route' to other destinations."⁴ We are calling on Cork City to end all this through traffic. Priority should start with ending all through traffic on residential streets. This should include:

- cutting off through roads by creating car cul-de-sacs but retaining walking and cycling throughways
- reducing two-way streets to one way
- tactical speed reductions interventions should be placed on wider roads in high residential streets such as real tree planters, or placing barriers on the road for drivers to move around
- local car access only, should be implemented in tightly neat urban areas including Shandon

Planting roadside trees and in-traffic calming planters, will not only shield and reduce noise levels, it will also encourage people to slow down.

We welcome the commitment to the Lee2Sea greenway which will be essential for increasing cycling and walking rates and should be allocated a SMART objective. It should be done in a manner that will increase family friendly cycling, e.g. surrounded by biodiversity and be off road. This will ensure all families have access to free active open-air recreation.

We are calling on Cork City Council to prioritise all new cycling infrastructure to parts of city suffering from neglect and with lower social-economic statistics, especially on the northside of the city as its hugely underserved. Areas with lower car ownership, lower employment rates and high rates of poverty should be prioritised for cycling and walking infrastructure.

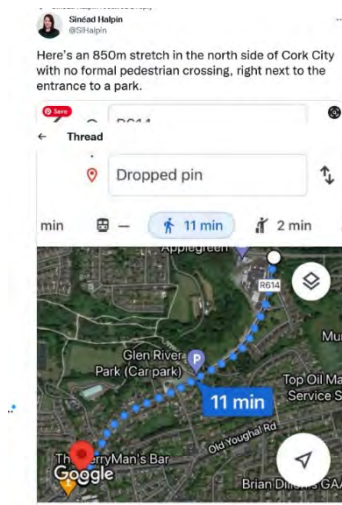
We are calling on Cork City Council to turn the central islands and surrounding central neighbourhoods into **car-free zone** (local access only) supported by equitable public transport and inclusive mobility routeways. This can be achieved over a decade and will not just greatly increase the

⁴ <https://www.corkcity.ie/en/transport-for-cork-city/faqs/>

liveability of the city centre for families but will become a destination for tourist who can enjoy a safe, quiet, and clean air city. This should be done within a decade and can begin with Car Free Sundays, turning the city into a family festival every Sunday.

In addition to the above the following is needed

- scramble crossings at every access point to and within the city centre island
- prioritise pedestrian lights with wait times no longer than 30 secs
- pedestrian crossings at all intersections
- increase zebra crossings
- well-connected and segregated cycle routes
- high-quality public bike parking across the city
- extend bike share scheme to the northside



⁵ <https://www.antisce.org/news/ireland-still-among-europes-climate-laggards-new-study>

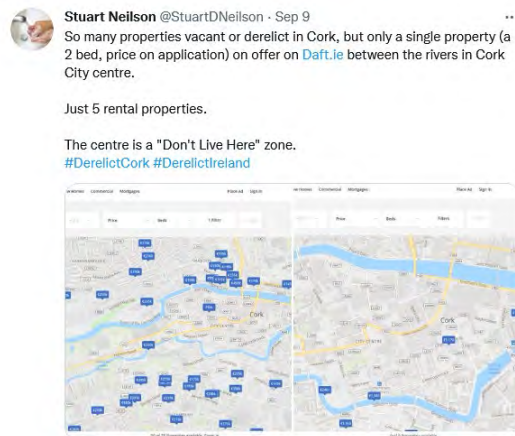
6. New Developments

The proposal to place **35.3% of** new developments on greenfield sites is unacceptable in 2021. Ireland has one of the worst climate performances in Europe⁵ and as transport accounts for 40% of our carbon emissions we need to ensure we do not create any new dependency on private car usage. To create new developments that are not adequately serviced by cycling or walking as the dominant transport mode is irresponsible. We ask Cork City Council to end the practice of this suburban spiralling. All new developments should ensure they are accessible to all necessary amenities (creche, schools, shops, medical centres, parks etc.) by **5 mins walking or cycling**. The CPD clearly demonstrates that there is ample space within existing urban footprints to provide housing within the lifespan of this CPD, therefore no greenfield or open public space should be rezoned.

To improve provision of homes:

- Enforce short term let laws limiting holiday rentals to 90 days only, with secret shoppers employed to find out which properties break the rules
- Creation of a one stop shop
- End vacancy and dereliction (see below)

Paragraph 10.2 should be expanded to ensure that Sites within the city centre acquired by Cork City Centre are only used for homes, public realm, and public services.



7. Dereliction and Vacancy

Like the rest of Ireland, Cork City has a large vacancy and dereliction problem. Cork City Council has failed to tackle long term vacancy (6+ months) and dereliction. We are calling on Cork City to bring in robust processes and a dedicated task force to focus on ending dereliction and reducing vacancy to an acceptable 2.5%⁶. Vacancy and dereliction offer a cheap, quick and sustainable way to provide affordable homes in the city by using what already exists in areas already serviced with essential infrastructure. The most sustainable building is the existing one so again

⁶

<http://www.housingagency.ie/sites/default/files/publications/32.%2016-05-17-Vacant-Homes-Paper-Housing-Agency.pdf>

given our resource and climate crisis we need to utilise what we already have.

The CSO census is the only reliable data on vacancy in Ireland and shows Cork City's average vacancy rates at 7.7% within the old city boundaries. The target of 2,273 to reuse existing stock lacks ambition and does not acknowledge the true potential identified by the CSO, which estimated that there were 4292 vacant homes within the old smaller city boundaries, 1180 of which were not considered to have been lived in for five years or more⁷. In addition, there are 400 more potential homes from unlocking underused upstairs space in 260 commercial city centre properties⁸. In addition, there are countless derelict and vacant commercial buildings and underused sites (underused includes private surface car parks) all with significant potential. Cork City Council urgently needs to demonstrate to owners that long term vacancy and dereliction will no longer be tolerated in Cork City. We are concerned that the wording used in Objectives 2.18, 2.20, 7.35 do not provide clarity on what the desired outcomes are. The verbs used are passive and non-committal.

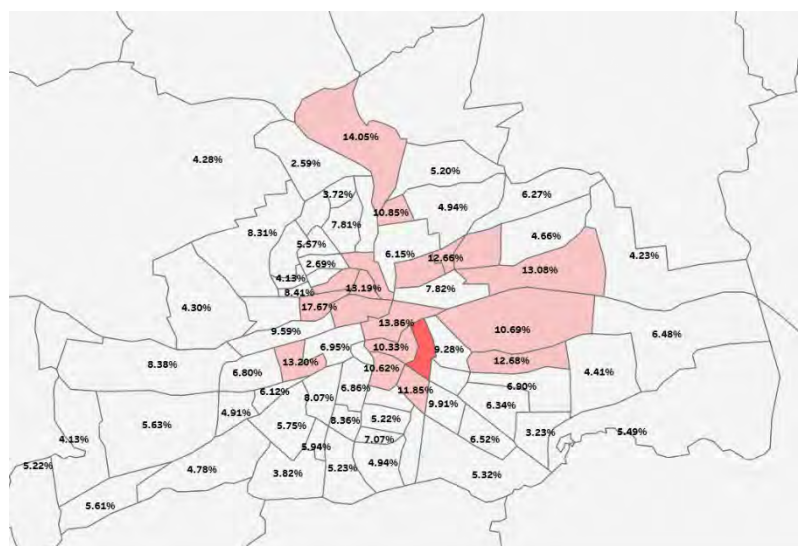
“Will seek to ...
Will encourage....
Will facilitate.....”

Vacancy is the leading cause of dereliction, therefore it should be tackled urgently. The work of anois agency (anois.org) has shown that dereliction is a must bigger problem than currently recognised. The anois 'This is

⁷ <https://www.echolive.ie/corknews/arid-40182804.html>

⁸ <https://www.irishexaminer.com/property/arid-30993404.html>

#DerelictIreland'⁹ report debunked 10 common myths of dereliction and showed that repeated excuses for inaction are no longer acceptable. Frank O'Connor's thread¹⁰ has nearly 450 derelict buildings on it all within just 2km of the city centre island, demonstrating that the Derelict Registry should be greatly expanded. Objective 2.21 does not say that dereliction will be reduced. As it happens if actions are progressed at the same rate as the previous 3 years it would be wholly insufficient to reduce vacancy or dereliction.



As can be seen in the map above created by Eoghan Ua Laoghaire Mac Giolla Phádraig, vacancy affects the city centre to a much higher degree than rural or suburban areas of the city.

If Cork City Council began with a full time dedicated Vacant Homes Officer who priorities placing derelict homes in the city on the derelict Register this would not just reduce dereliction (vacancy is a gateway to it), it would raise additional revenue to fund more staff and could go into ending council voids and crucially providing more homes, greatly benefiting the community and local economy. Extreme long-term vacancy (3+ years) should be categorised as derelict by Cork City council (with exemptions for those in nursing homes), this would be consistent with numerous properties currently on the derelict register. We are calling for a fair, consistent and transparent approach to end dereliction.

Cork City Council need to enforce legal obligations on all property owners to ensure their properties do not become 'Dangerous Buildings and Structures' under the 'Local Government (Sanitary Services) Act 1964'. The city centre has become a dangerous place to be with many fearing that structurally unsound buildings will fall on them. Sadly, it is only a matter of time until someone is seriously injured or killed again while walking in the city. Yet this is totally avoidable if Cork City Council take responsibility as custodians of the city's heritage.

Cork City Council need to enforce the full strength of the Dereliction Act on all derelict properties within the city boundaries, ensuring full collection of the Dereliction Levy which should be reinvested into enhancement of the city's heritage. The time for excuses is over, the time to end dereliction is now. We are calling on Cork City Council to be the first Irish city to eradicate dereliction. Our report 'This is Derelict Ireland'

⁹ <https://indd.adobe.com/view/fbe49c7c-0c2f-4d2b-9557-d09b541ccd71>

¹⁰ https://twitter.com/frank_oconnor/status/1275900684186062849

¹¹ https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/eoghan.o.leary.fitzpatrick/viz/MS322_Tableau_Assignment_17420134_17760685/MyDashboard

can be accessed here: <https://indd.adobe.com/view/fbe49c7c-0c2f-4d2b-9557-d09b541ccd71>

Cork City Council need to enforce the full strength of the Protected Structures under Part IV of the Planning and Development Act 2000. There are many protected structures in Cork City that have been left decay which has resulted in significant loss of their character. As custodians this is not acceptable. Future generations will look back in horror at this period of Corks history.

Under these 3 pieces of legislations, Cork City Council should seek prosecution of neglectful owners who are draining the city's economy, destroying our communities and risking serious harm and death to all who use the streets of the city.

Vacant Offices and hotels

Too many vacant offices are a problem that many cities are facing and Cork is no different. With office vacancy rates at 13.4% in Q2 2021¹² it would be irresponsible to pursue Objective 7.12. When these high vacancy rates are combined with the accelerated home working trend, COVID uncertainty and a large amount of floorspace yet to come onto the market (either though builds near completion and recent planning applications) the problems increase.

¹² <https://lisney.com/advisory-valuations-and-research/q2-cork-commercial-2021/>

New office developments in the pipeline.

Penrose Quay	1938338	153141 sq ft
Horgan's Quay	1737563	No.2 15392 sqm
		No. 4 10,850 sqm
Prism	1837894	6000 sqm
Navigation Square	1636773	C 4,143 sqm D 10,443 sqm
Sullivan's quay	1737436	9,310 sqm
Camden Quay	1636864	6000 sqm
Custom Hse/Bonded WH	1938589	
Hanover street	1838175	1120 sqm
Brooke's yard	1536482	22,401 sqm
Anderson's Quay	1034671	14,000 sqm

For instance, in Amsterdam, its office vacancy rate is 11.5%¹³ which is considered so problematic that Amsterdam has a policy converting empty offices for other uses such as homes, hotels, schools, swimming pools, creative and co-working¹⁴. Please note note that a healthy commercial

¹³ Knight Frank Dutch Office Market Report Research 2021

¹⁴ <https://twitter.com/judesherry/status/1369413840425938945>

vacancy rate is 5%. This combination of reduced demand and increased supply will disrupt the demand and supply equilibrium leading to even higher vacancy rates which will negatively drain the economy, reduce supply of land available for housing and reduce investor confidence in the city.

There are already many derelict sites across the city awaiting work to commence on approved planning permission. Many of these sites have changed ownership many times and for large escalating prices. This speculative game is destroying the city centre. As such Cork City Council should introduce a mandatory planning condition, that if existing and future planning approvals are not delivered within a specified timeframe (e.g. 18 months) the land will be rezoned for social housing and/or open public space.

More offices in the city centre would create dead zones during the night making the centre unliveable for many as it will reduce the ability to create sustainable communities. As Stuart Neilson has pointed out Cork City is a male dominated city¹⁵. This is not sustainable. Clearly shows the city centre is not suitable for families and women. Adding more offices will add to this imbalance. In addition, the city centre is not suitable for new large-scale offices given its marsh composition, medieval layout, Georgian architecture which results in smaller footprint buildings. Therefore, only small-scale offices and hotels should be permitted in the City Centre and underused above shop spaces should be promoted for offices use. Large scale offices would be more suitable in the Docklands where large footprint office buildings can be integrated with midrise

apartment blocks and the current building stock, which should be retained, refurbished and repurposed.

Cork City Council should implement a **Meanwhile Use programme** for all vacant commercial buildings beginning with all empty and underused council owned buildings and sites. This should be through an open and transparent process where anyone can apply for access to a space. These new renters should become custodians for these empty buildings committing to restore and maintain them from further deterioration. Business Rates for vacant properties should be applied at 99% after 6 months. Also ensure large developments have built-in meanwhile use as a planning condition for pre-development, with evictions only occurring immediately before construction starts.

8. Think Global Act Local

The CPD insignificantly addresses Climate Change, biodiversity loss and resource scarcity and the impact these will have on Cork City in the coming years. These include economic recession, food shortages, fuel shortages, high costs and resource depletion amongst others. It has been well documented that this will lead to an acceleration of trade wars with significant local and global consequences. Cork has a heavy reliance on imported fuel, food, resources (e.g., clothes, construction material and technical products) as well as a heavy reliance on international employers.

Material costs have skyrocketed during COVID-19 and Brexit alone, but material costs are on a constant price rise since the 1970's, this rising

¹⁵ <https://wordpress.stuartneilson.com/gender-and-age-inequalities-in-space-and-housing-in-cork-city>

price curve is well cemented in global economies and will only escalate as we hit more climate and biodiversity disruptions. We are already facing the prospect of electric black outs this 2021 winter. This will adversely affect those who have already begun the transition to low carbon economy, such as those with heat pumps and electric cars.

We propose that the Cork City Council begins to immediately invest in future economic resilience actions in Cork. Cork City needs to rapidly establish a series of localised initiatives to build in resource and economic resilience and create localised circular economies.

Local community energy generation

- Turn Cork into an **Energy Farm** through placing solar panels on every council building, especially on social housing
- Fund and coordinate local renewable energy generation for community ownership and use only, as is common across Germany
- Prioritise all energy efficiency programmes to those living in energy poverty, estimated to be 16% of the population
- Ensure all new buildings in Cork contain renewable energy generation and rainwater harvesting as conditions of planning permission

Local Food production

- Establish a vast network of 100 localised urban farms. Cork City Council should immediately open all vacant sites within their ownership to community use, even for meanwhile use. This should include community composting facilities. The knock-on effect on community building and cohesion would be very significant.

9. Circular Economy

The Circular Economy is not just about waste, and in fact will lead to the eradication of waste. The Circular Economy is about how we use material resources. This understanding is completely lacking in the CDP Objective 9.11 which is of grave concern as it risks creating future economic problems. With escalating material costs and increasing supply disruptions Cork City is at a higher risk of economic disruption than other parts of Ireland due to “The economic profile of Cork illustrates a dependence on high value manufacturing and services” and that “There is a higher than average proportion of people working in Manufacturing (15%), which is anticipated given the strength of a number of manufacturing sectors”. If Cork City does not ensure these companies have access to raw materials (through a circular economy) they will simply relocate to other countries, as is common practice especially for Critical Raw Materials. Objective 9.11 needs to refocus away from waste as a transition to a Circular Economy requires a lot more work than just ‘value recovery’.

On top of ensuring that companies have critical raw materials, Cork City Councils primary focus should be ensuring that Cork citizens have access to a high quality of life at affordable prices in a sustainable manner. Therefore, we are calling on Cork City Council to implement a localised **Circular Economy** which will require significant capacity building of localised skills in manufacturing, remanufacturing and repair, amongst others. Transitioning Cork to a **Circular City** will bring significant direct economic benefits including resilient job creation, new sustainable business opportunities and true cost reductions. This needs to include

- A **Manifesto for Urban/City Scale Manufacturing and Making** which focuses on the local economy, responsible entrepreneurship, underpinned by sustainable design and circularity
- A Manifesto for a **Local, Circular, Foundational, Sharing and Collaborative Economy**
- Fund and coordinate
 - Local repair cafes
 - Library of things
 - City wide reuse packaging schemes for take away services
 - Sharing council owned good and underused spaces
- Collective bins in dense areas for bulk waste to offer for reuse as well as public owned recycling collection

Objective 5.14 should have a condition that all new commercial development should be designed to be flexible to meet future market demands. This future proofing should be built in from the start and should ensure the buildings can easily, quickly and cheaply transform between uses such as offices, hotels, homes etc. This will ensure all potential needs can be met from this new development. The new development should be designed and built to be dismantlable, this circular design approach is key to the circular economy and will ensure the future viability of the city. Hence the end-of-life scenarios for every building needs to be designed in from the outset, to ensure Cork City can become a Circular City. This is in line with international innovative construction methods. New buildings should be built to withstand future resources shortages, being easy to maintain and build to last a century, at a minimum. Short life cycle buildings are carbon intensive and create

unnecessary burdens on future generations who will be facing even more significant economic and resource constraints.

10. Abolish demolish

We very much welcome Objective 11.12 which encourages renovation of existing buildings instead of demolition. We are calling for this to be expanded to all building and not just heritage buildings, i.e., pre-1950s. If retention is not possible due to structural problems they should be carefully taken down to rebuild in the same style.

Facadism should not be an acceptable compromise. The council should block all developments that only retain building facades, especially in excessively high inappropriate scaled developments. This approach has been shown to have a significant longer negative effect on a city's heritage, community sense of place, culture and economic resilience as well as significantly reducing economic benefits from tourism. Our heritage is priceless.

We are calling for clarity on what 'exceptional circumstances' in paragraph 11.153 relate to. We are calling on Cork City Council to ensure that exceptional circumstances only relate to where a building is structurally unsound and at a danger to inhabitants and the public.

"never remove, only add"

We are calling on Cork City Council to enact a condition that demolition work should be replaced with deconstruction of a building with material recovery occurring within 1 month and new construction beginning within 3 months. Unfortunately, the city is already blighted with many demolition sites such as Camden Quay and Sullivan's Quay. This creation

of Dereliction Wastelands in the city is totally unacceptable and has a massive detrimental effect on the community and local economy as well as tourism.

Construction and Demolition waste is one of the biggest waste sources in Ireland, accounting for 36%, therefore we are calling on Cork City Council to require a Circular Material Recovery Site Plan. When material is removed from a building it should be reused and recycled on site. Only a minimal volume of material should be removed from the site and only consist of toxic materials such as asbestos or PVC. Any non-toxic material removed should be carefully disassembled and 100% reused or recycled on site. This is especially important for these finite materials that are no longer being mined like Cork's unique red sandstone and white limestone but also durable materials like steel, zinc, copper, stone, wood, brick etc. Cork City Council should fund and coordinate a circular economy marketplace for construction materials in Cork City and enact 100% material reuse of all construction waste as a condition of planning approval. All Cork City Council contracts and tenders should contain a requirement for urban mining and salvaging used materials for reuse and repurposing.

11. Mincéir/Traveller Accommodation

We are calling on Cork City Council to provide safe, liveable, beautiful and functional accommodation for the Mincéir/Traveller community. That they still have poor quality housing in 2021 is a national scandal. The existing annual budgets should be used to rectify the situation immediately.

12. Heritage

We welcome Cork City Council's preference for renovation heritage building stock in the city. We call on Cork City Council to establish a **Common Heritage Charter**. This can be based on the Declaration of Amsterdam 1975.

We are requesting the City Council to urgently undertake a survey of buildings stock including use, vacancy, dereliction, structural integrity, condition, age, heritage design features, unique Irish and Cork features. This information should be made easily accessible to the public.

The cultural significance of Cork City's built heritage is not sufficiently addressed in the draft plan. Cork City Council urgently needs to establish and implement a Design DNA Manifesto. This Design DNA Manifesto should establish a set of design principles that represents the unique urban character of Cork City including its built heritage, urban design, public realm etc. It needs to set into the foundations of the City Development Plans and incorporated into the planning process. Cork like many Irish towns and cities rapidly expanded its built environment between 1750 and 1840. Much of this was based on design principles influenced by the European Age of Enlightenment which had swept across Europe from the Venetian State and Andrea Palladio's work. This classical urban form and design traditions that stem from ancient Greece and Renaissance Italy were eagerly adopted during this 'Irish Age of Reason' which evolved a unique set of Irish design principles. These included clean simple lines, grand public spaces, harmony, balance, golden ratio, material efficiency, human scale, local materials and zero waste. Although Cork shares similarities with other European cities (such as Bristol or even Truro in the West Country with origins in old Amsterdam and old London) its built heritage is very unique and

significant. The combination of the medieval city's tight nature of the buildings, laneways and architecture placed close to the river's edge provides a unique urban character that is not found anywhere else. This uniqueness should be respected and incorporated into all new builds within the city through the Design DNA Manifesto. Cork City Council should demand high quality new architecture that fits appropriately with our current uniqueness and builds on it.

Cultural heritage created by our urban environment is not just influenced by buildings but also by land use. Cork city was not designed or developed for cars. Not only does this create air pollution damaging the built heritage and biodiversity, it also creates an isolation of citizens and destruction of communities. Where once streets were full of life, with children playing, they are now death traps of pollution and speeding cars. Cork City Councils needs to develop a comprehensive traffic management plan that ends through traffic and introduces 30km (maximum) traffic speed limits across the 18th century cork city boundaries within the 5 year timeframe of this plan. This needs to be combined with luxury in our public realm that creates inclusive, welcoming and playful spaces as well as an abundance of public seating for citizens to experience the city.

We are requesting the City Council to urgently conserve all heritage within existing Architectural Conservation Areas. Recently Cork City has had its ACA status reduced to being close to meaningless with the demolition of a 144-year-old building listed in National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH), in a predominantly 2-4 story ACA for the construction of a 20-story block, which instead became an illegal carpark. It is currently a derelict site. This makes no sense at any level and

alienates the community even further as well as impacting their sense of place and their vitality.

All buildings on the NIAH within the city boundaries should be protected. All areas with a majority of built cultural heritage, 50% pre-1950's buildings should become ACAs.

Cork City Council should establish a 'One Stop Shop' to assist owners of 100 year old building to maintain, refurbish and repurpose them, including planning, fire officers, conservation officer, legal guidelines etc. This could be funded through collection of the Dereliction Levy.

13. Biodiversity

We are requesting the City Council to integrate habitat protection into all Cork City Council contracts and tenders. The recent widespread habitat destruction during the construction of the Passage West Railway Greenway during bird nesting season was totally unacceptable in any situation, but even more so when we are faced with a biodiversity collapse. This should never ever happen again.

The City Council should set an ambitious 1,000,000 Tree City Centre policy to include:

- The ambitious goal of creating a **city forest** suitable to all the different terrains and soils of Cork City. Covering all city streets in a canopy of trees they should comprise of multiple fruit and nut trees throughout the city and suburbs. This will have multiple benefits relating but not limiting to reducing storm water drainage needs, providing free local healthy food, providing cooling and shading in extreme heat etc.

- Establish a tree permit to remove any tree with a priority placed on relocation of trees instead of killing them. Build into the process a policy that every tree that has to be removed needs to be replaced immediately by three trees.
- Request information of planning habitat destruction in all new build planning applications. Establish planning conditions that any habitat destroyed during new building should be replaced immediately at another location in the city.
- Establishment of wood reuse scheme so all dead trees and used wood, can be effectively harvested and produced into new functional products. However, leaving dead wood in-situ should be a priority as it brings a multitude of biodiversity benefits.

Establish a 20-year plan to reopen all Cork City Waterways to ensure Cork can maximise its heritage and cultural value, celebrate and utilise its waterways and ensure Cork is the top choice for all future tourists.

Ban the use of pesticides, herbicide and peat-based compost, by all Cork City Council staff and contractors. Proactively seek national legislation to achieve the same. This type of leadership would inspire confidence in Cork city.

Light pollution affects biodiversity in our urban areas. Cork City Council needs to bring in measures to reduce and limit light pollution such as turning off external buildings lights late at night and early morning and using low glare light bulbs. All lighting should be safe for wildlife and light pollution should be minimised.

14. Play

There is only one green space in the city centre, and this soon will be reduced to hard cement surfaces. Therefore, we are calling on Cork City Council to Establish 1000 pocket parks in the city centre and the inner suburbs. These essential recreational and natural facilities are essential for health, well-being and culture and should be recreated across the city to be accessible to all urban residents within 300m distance of their home. The liveability of the city centre will be greatly enhanced with these open green spaces.

Blackpool is also severely underserved for green and play areas. This should be a priority considering there are large number of new family homes being built in the city village. This is replicated across the northside as the survey by Michael O’Sullivan of the quality of parks and play areas in the city clearly demonstrated¹⁶. This shows the inequalities between the north and southside that needs urgent addressing. Therefore, all park funding should be allocated to creating new parks in the city centre and socio-economic deprived areas until they outperform other areas. For existing parks funding should be spend on better maintenance, as well as bins, public seating, trees and pollinators and public toilets. As such the development of Bishop Lucey Park should be halted.

We are calling on Cork City Council to commit to not implementing any human-made interventions in Glen Park. This is a delicate ecosystem and will not be able to withstand any level of construction. It is a gem in terms of natural heritage and should be valued for that.

In addition, Cork City Council should commit to creation of new public swimming pools including lidos in the city.

¹⁶ . <https://t.co/aGBiUT9jBa?amp=1>

15. End all OPW flood relief schemes

Cork City Council should immediately request Office of Public Works (OPW) a halt to all flood defence plans for River Lee and River Bride/Kiln. These plans are extremely damaging to our natural heritage. They will result in a permanent loss of habitat and the destruction of what is widely considered the World's longest intact Georgian quays, the latter of which represents the largest planned destruction of cultural heritage in the history of the state. These OPW plans have received thousands of objections from residents of the city, yet Cork City Council have ignored these citizen consultation and has instead promoted the OPW schemes, against the wishes of its residents. By working in conflict with civil society, Cork City council risks further eroding Corkonians confidence in the city's future thus reducing the city's investment potential.

Cork City Council should develop and source investment for plans to develop a best practice tidal barrier, natural floodplains upstream, regular maintenance/clearing of debris from rivers and creation of nature based urban water retention interventions such as extensive tree planting.

Cork City Council should implement nature-based solutions requirements in all development proposals, and at a minimum for the suds drainage. A key element for such a policy objective is for a presumption against culverting and a presumption in favour of de-culverting.

Cork City Council should fight the permanent destruction of our fragile urban ecology. Considering Ireland is facing a biodiversity emergency (declared by both Cork City Council and Dail Eireann and the European Parliament) it is unacceptable to undertake avoidable destruction of the

natural environment surrounding the River Bride and River Lee. This includes permanent eradication of a protected species Otters (under the EU Habitats Directives) from the river Bride which is totally unacceptable and should not be supported by Cork City Council. As well as the eradication of brown trout, eels and multiple bird species (many of which are facing extinction) that all live and feed from the River Bride and River Lee. Any biodiversity plan is meaningless without urgently addressing this action.

Cork City Council should fight any permanent destruction of all blue and green infrastructure. The OPW plans contravenes both the Blackpool Village 2010 and North Blackpool 2011 plans, which identified multiple areas suitable for Bird Sanctuary or Biodiversity Parks while the proposed drainage scheme will instead remove all biodiversity in and along the riverbank. This is especially concerning considering that the city centre and local areas like Blackpool has very limited natural resources, destruction of the one haven for wildlife in the area will negatively affect the community, all generations, having a knock-on effect on everyone's mental health and wellbeing. Thus, affecting the economy.

Cork City Council should fight the permanent destruction of the two-foot bridges in Blackpool Retail Park as well as the permanent alteration and destruction to the heritage structures pre-dating 1940's proposed under the Blackpool *River Bride (Blackpool) Flood Relief Scheme*.

We are calling on Cork City Council to adapt a 20-year plan to reopen all existing **city waterways**.

16. New Economy

Develop a **Foundational Economy** where the core needs of the citizens of Corks are met within the wider Cork city region, thus creating economic resilience. This model will help ensure Cork city can withstand any major disruptions to international trade.

Apply a localised **Sharing and Collaborative Economy** driven internally in the Council, across the private sector and by the citizens in Cork. This will ensure all under-utilised assets in Cork are exploited for the benefit of all. This in turn will enable significant cost reductions increasing the economic resilience of the city.

We recommend the council brings in **capped rental scheme** for all tenants, especially those on mid to low incomes to ensure the housing crisis does not worsen when the next economic recession occurs, especially long term global economic degrowth caused by climate change.

We recommend Cork **does not sell any remaining public land** but instead retains public ownership. Through a land rental model Cork City Council can facilitate the development of these public lands in a responsible, resilient and future proofing manor. This can be achieved in many ways, including through stipulations in the rental contract on types of permitted land use.

This is Derelict Ireland.

Rest. Play. Work.



anois.

anois.org

Imagine... a city that invites everyone to Rest Play Work.

Transforming, reusing and repurposing unused sites and buildings will make urban Ireland a better place for all of us to live, learn, love, share, create and contribute.

Here we explore urban dereliction, dispelling myths that contribute to the continuation of this long-lasting blight hampering Irish villages, towns and cities.





4 images sourced from Google maps

What is dereliction?

Dereliction is a description of a property that has a **negative impact on its neighbourhood**. A property that is an eyesore, that has contaminants, likely to detract from the amenity, character or appearance of a neighbourhood.¹

A derelict property could be ruinous, in a dangerous condition, neglected, decaying, unsightly, or contain litter, rubbish, debris or waste. It is a broad definition.

Dereliction is primarily caused by a lack of care and maintenance frequently compounded by long term vacancy.² Yet, dereliction does not mean the property has been abandoned, as some derelict properties can be regularly used .

Unfortunately, dereliction also has a contagion character. If left unaddressed, it can quickly spread within the neighbouring urban environment.

These photos illustrate how two homes have become uninhabitable in just 10 years. Take a moment to consider these houses were once family homes and should still be.

1. This description of dereliction is taken from the Dereliction Act 1990

2. In addition to derelict properties, Ireland has a significant vacancy problem too, which is outside the scope of this report.

We are calling on Cork City Council to be the first city in Ireland to eradicate dereliction

Dereliction is a totally unnecessary blight that is sucking the economic potential out of all our cities, towns and villages, making core urban areas unliveable, eating away at communities, eroding our sense of place and jeopardising the viability of local businesses and traders.

Dereliction is such an epidemic in Ireland that many of us have become normalised to decaying and collapsing buildings. Sadly, this has led to an acceptance mindset of 'that's the way things are'.

But why should dereliction define the fabric of our urban spaces, and why should any of us have to experience it on a daily basis?

We have a housing crisis, massive shortages of available housing stock, skyrocketing rents and unaffordable homes, yet we have thousands of potential homes lying derelict. Why have we allowed it to be socially, financially and legally acceptable for the minority to destroy our cities through disrespect and neglect, while our neighbours die on our streets or continuously suffer for lack of an affordable and secure place they can truly call home.

Dereliction is a key barrier to the sustainable densification and growth plans for our city centres. Especially when we have such short supply of homes, play and workspaces in our urban cores. For Irish urban areas to survive and thrive we need to eradicate dereliction.



Cork City is our home

Moving to back to Ireland in late 2018, we were shocked by the level of the homelessness³ and dereliction in Ireland. We decided to investigate dereliction, concentrating our efforts on Cork City.

After almost two years of immersive research⁴, we went public in June 2020, sharing images of derelict properties on Twitter. This ongoing thread of 300+ properties has been viewed millions of times and built a community of interest. This report is part of the RestPlayWork series by anois.



Cork City Council currently have 95 properties listed on its Derelict Register. However, this does not reflect the true scale of dereliction in the city given that to date we have identified over **340 derelict properties, all within 2km of the city centre 'island'**.

It should be noted that dereliction is not necessarily worse in Cork City than anywhere else in Ireland. We are confident that these findings are representative of the situation across most Irish towns and cities.

3. With the clear case for Housing First and Right to Home policies we decided to target our expertise on dereliction.

4. Research analysis and synthesis is based on a range of methods including reviewing legislation, policies and government documents, mapping and recording sites, data mining, media analysis and a range of meetings with different stakeholders.

10 Deadly Myths of Dereliction

1

There's no profit
in dereliction

2

Owners have no
incentives

3

Planning system
is holding
progress back

4

Building regs.
are stopping
renovations

5

The Constitution
protects private
property rights

6

Nothing can
be done until
the owner is
identified

7

Taxing
dereliction is all
that's possible

8

There is no way
to ensure the
dereliction levy
is paid

9

CPDs are not
a realistic
solution

10

Progress will not
happen without
new legislation



Myth 1 Busted

There's no profit in dereliction

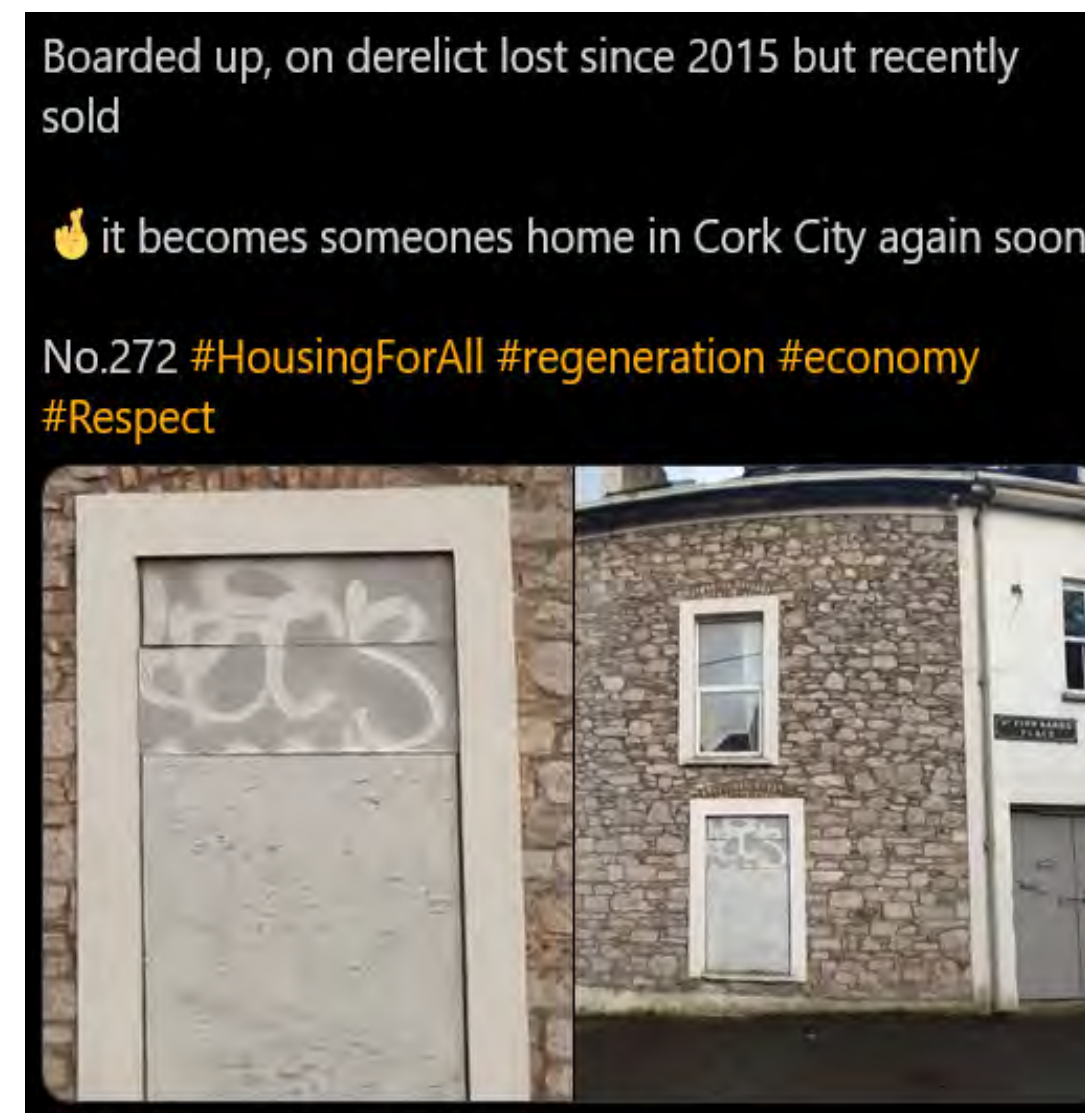
A modest derelict home can bring in €20k a year through speculation

We calculated that an owner of a modest derelict property in Cork City can earn €20k a year by just sitting on it. For example, here are two homes from the Derelict Register that have sold for prices much higher than their original valuation. Proving that substantial profit that can be made from simply leaving a property derelict.

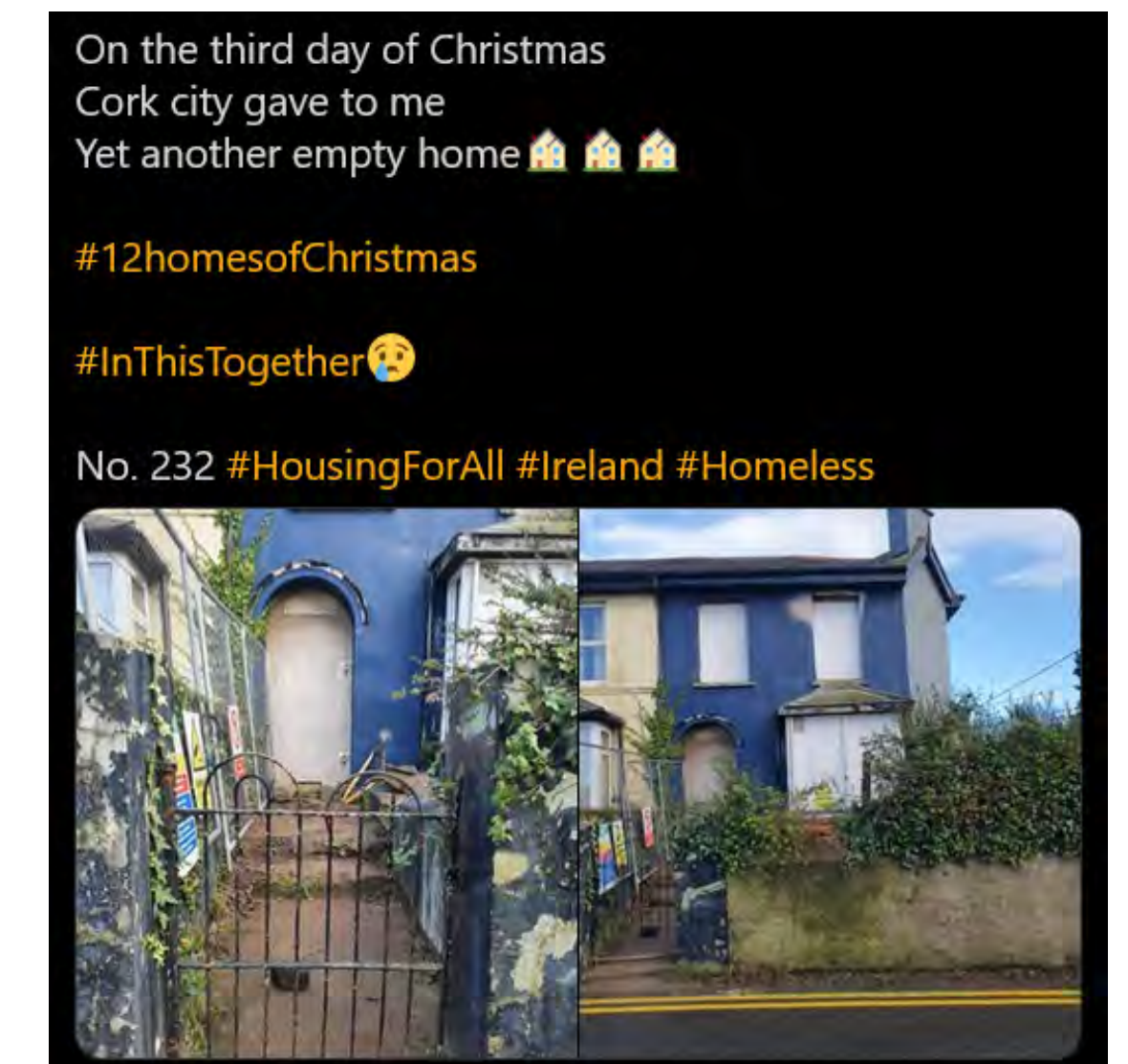
Given the sale price for commercial properties is not publicly available it is not possible to ascertain their potential profit. However, later in this report we present one case study of a large commercial derelict 'site' that has been very profitable over a decade of decay and dereliction.

“Dereliction is not a function of poverty but a function of wealth. Because only the truly wealthy landlord can afford to sit on the asset”

David McWilliams



€90k profit over 5 years



€100k profit over 4 years

Myth 2 Busted

Owners have no incentives Not only is there a booming property market there is also 7 different funding schemes available

A booming housing market alone would logically be considered the biggest incentive for owners of derelict properties to sell up. Between 2013-2018 house prices rose by 50%, continued to rise since 2018 and are predicted to rise by further 4% in 2021. Yet very few derelict properties have sold since 2013.

Likewise, rents have more than doubled since 2010 and have continued to rise even through the COVID19 pandemic, regardless of the widespread unemployment and college closures. Yet there are still hundreds of long-term derelict properties.

For owners who wish to invest in their properties in order to sell, rent or live in them, 7 funding schemes⁵ are available:

- Architectural Conservation Area Funding
- Built Heritage Investment Scheme
- Long-term Leasing Scheme
- Repair and Lease Scheme
- Buy and Renew Scheme
- Living City Initiative
- SEAI grants

5. The eligibility for these schemes vary depending on the property's location and suitability.



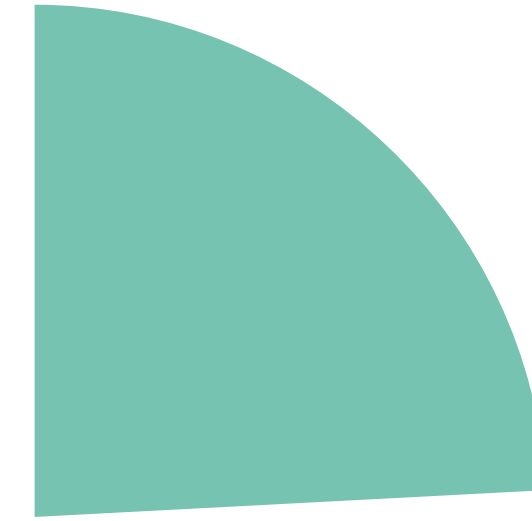
of derelict properties have
being sold since 2013

Myth 3 Busted

Planning is holding progress back
More owners have let their planning permissions lapse than owners being refused planning

Planning permission is not a prerequisite to bringing a derelict property back into use. However, it is likely that some sort of planning will be required. Even if it's just for window and door replacements, particularly within an Architectural Conservation Areas.

Preparing and submitting planning applications require a relatively small amount of time and money. Having open planning permission on a derelict property can be considered as showing intent to do something. Our research shows that the majority of derelict properties don't have open planning.



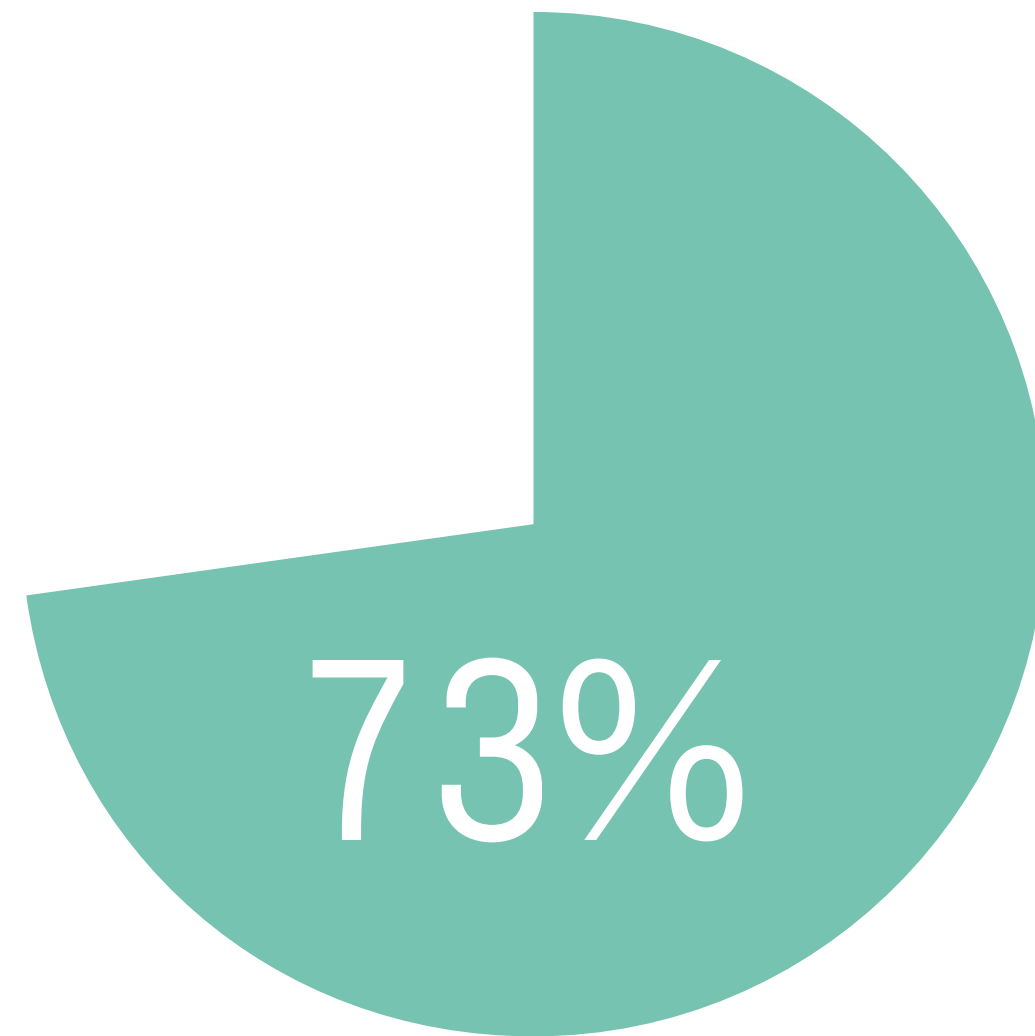
24%

of derelict properties currently have open planning permission



5%

of derelict properties have been refused planning permission



73%

of properties with planning permission have let it lapse



35%

of properties with planning are serial planners, i.e. repeatedly gaining permission

Myth 4 Busted

Building regs.
are stopping
renovations

Building regs. should not be
a barrier for the majority of
derelict properties

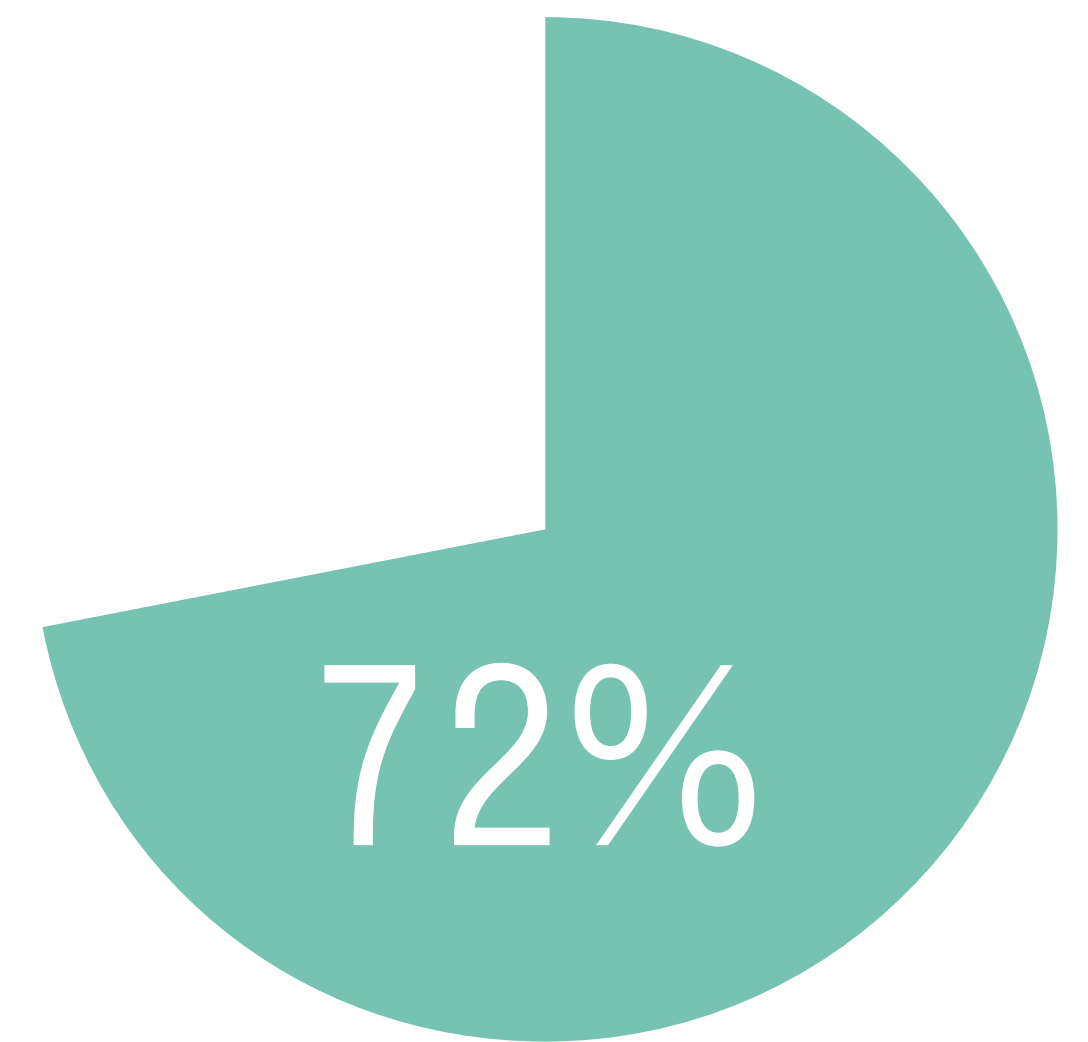
Public perception of building regulations is frequently inaccurate. This is causing a lot of confusion, thus putting many people off renovating an old, derelict or long-term vacant property.

In 2018, the Department of Housing released a *'Bringing Back Homes - Manual for the Reuse of Existing Buildings'*. This clearly states that old buildings do not need to meet energy efficiency regulations if it is not technically, functionally and economically possible.

Likewise, building regulations are only applicable in 3 circumstances:

- to the new additions in a property such as extensions, electrics, plumbing
- if structural integrity changes are made
- if there is a change of use

We acknowledge that challenges can occur for large-scale developments, multi-occupancy buildings, above shop conversions and for protected structures. Further clarity is required for these circumstances, especially in relation to fire safety. However, for the majority of the derelict properties in Cork City building regulations are not a barrier to renovating them to a habitable standard.



of derelict properties can be brought
back into use while easily adhering to
building regs.

Myth 5 Busted

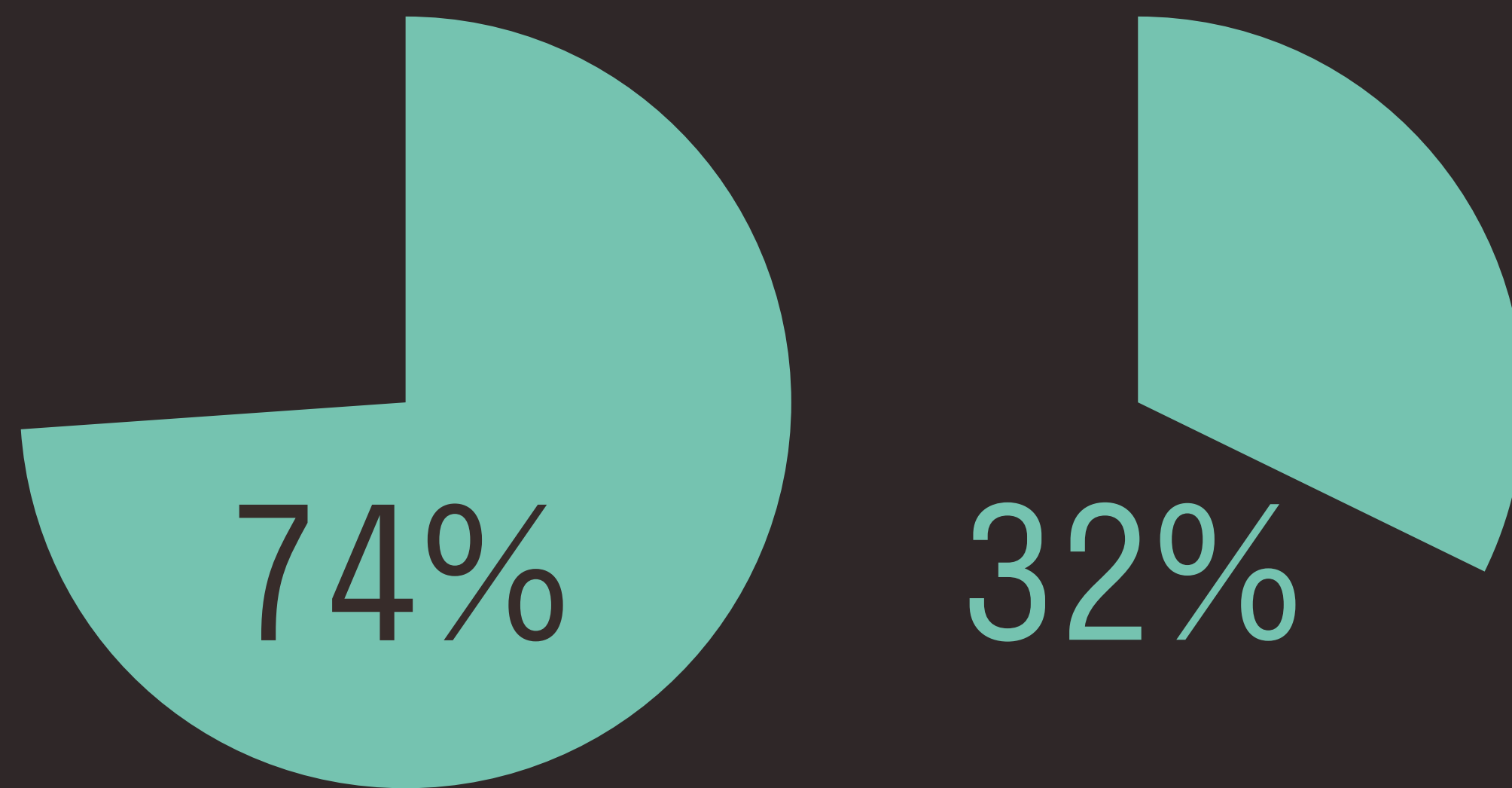
The Constitution protects private property rights
Private property rights can be limited by social justice and common good

The constitution is there to ensure our rights to social justice and the common good are enacted at all times, crisis or not. This is for the benefit of all citizens, not just land and property owners. In the days before COVID19 we were repeatedly told an eviction moratorium was not constitutional. We have since seen that this is simply not true. With a massive housing shortage, a homeless crisis, and escalating house prices and rents, we need to ensure that our constitutional rights are enacted at all times.

Section 43 of the Irish Constitution

43.2.1 The State recognises, however, that the exercise of the rights mentioned in the foregoing provisions of this Article ought, in civil society, to be regulated by the principles of social justice

43.2.2 The State, accordingly, may as occasion requires delimit by law the exercise of the said rights with a view to reconciling their exercise with the exigencies of the common good



of current/previous owners
can be publicly identified

of derelict properties are
in the land registry

Myth 6

Nothing can
be done until
the owner is
identified

Identifying the owner of properties is challenging in Ireland and sometimes nigh on impossible. Only 90% of the total Irish landmass is in the Land Registry. This is even lower in Cork at 86%, because property sales have only had to be legally registered from 2011 onwards.

Luckily, the Derelict Act accounts for this challenge, so local authorities only need to undertake 'reasonable effort' to identify the owner.

Busted

A property can go on
the Derelict Register
without identifying
the owner

The assumption taken here is that reasonable effort includes:

- placing notices on the building and in newspapers requesting the owner to get in contact
- searching in land register, records of deeds and planning applications
- asking neighbours, previous owners etc. if they know the owner
- placing a time limit on staff hours spent liaising between receivers and solicitor



Myth 7

Taxing
dereliction
is all that's
possible

Statutory legal obligations to remove dereliction can be given to owners. This process starts with the issuing of a Section 11 Notice. This notice must specify what measures are necessary to remove dereliction and by what date it needs to be completed. To speed up the process these measures are exempt from the planning process.

Cork City have not issued any Section 11 Notices to date.

Busted

Owners of derelict
properties can be
prosecuted

If a property owner does not comply with the Section 11 Notice they can be prosecuted. This could result in a summary conviction with a fine of up to €2.5k or imprisonment for up to 6 months. In extreme cases a conviction or indictment could lead to **a fine of up to €55k and an imprisonment up to 2 years.**

In addition, to prosecution under the Dereliction Act, local authorities can also prosecute owners of dangerous structures and neglected protected structures. For some buildings, all three prosecution routes should be pursued.

There are 4 steps a local authority can take to ensure a much higher collection rate than is currently happening:

1. Invoice all properties on the Dereliction Register as it is impossible to collect the levy otherwise.
2. Only suspend the derelict site levy for extreme circumstances of undue hardship such as recipients of the Fair Deal Scheme and recent bereavements (e.g. 6 month timeframe).
3. Strictly apply the late payment monthly interest fine of 1.25% for all non-payments after 2 months.
4. Place all unpaid invoices and fines as a charge against the property. This means that when a property is sold the seller has a legal obligation to ensure that all outstanding levies are paid to the council before the sale is completed.

Myth 8

There is no way to ensure the dereliction levy is paid

The Dereliction Levy means that the owner of a property on the Dereliction Registry can and should be charged a yearly 7% levy of its market value (this was 3% until 2020). In addition, the Minister for Housing can increase this levy for any individual property up to a maximum of 10%.

Busted

The levy can be applied as a charge on the property itself

If a local authority is in dialogue with a derelict property owner who has plans and means to renovate or develop a derelict property, the local authority can decide to place the Levy into a bond. This bond acts as a guarantee that is secured with a bank or insurance company, who ensures that all Derelict Levies due on the property will be paid if the planned scheme is not carried out within 5 years.

Cork City

Cork City Council established a new policy in 2019 that will see them placing a CP0 on properties that have been derelict for more than 2 years, and where the owner is not engaging and where no planning or sale related activity has taken place. Cork City Council are currently in the process of placing CP0's on **17 derelict properties**.

Limerick

Limerick Council have acquired **100 derelict properties** in the last 2 years.

Louth

Between 2015 and 2018, Louth Council acquired **92 derelict properties** which it turned back into homes for use for social housing.

Myth 9

CP0s are not
a realistic
solution

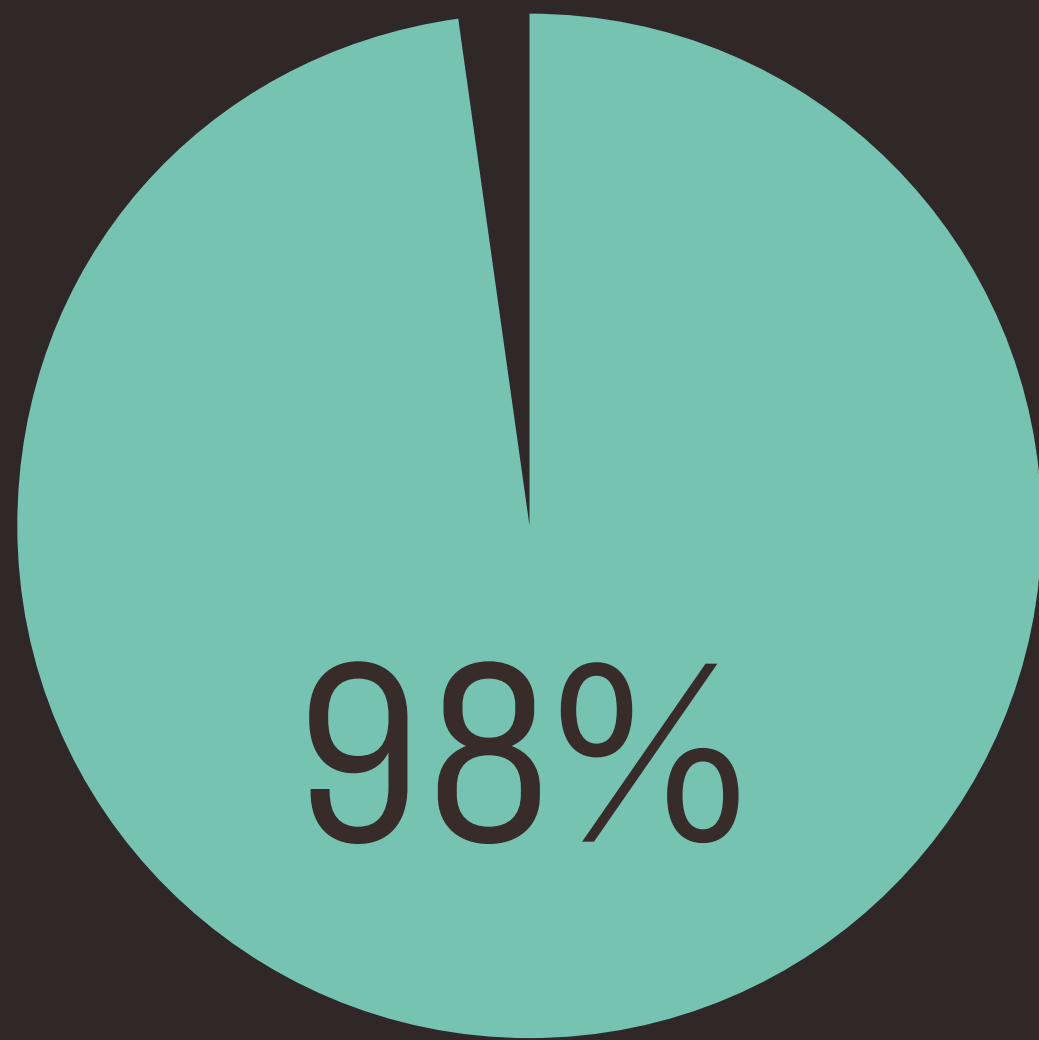
Busted

CP0s can be a quick
and practical step
towards addressing
dereliction

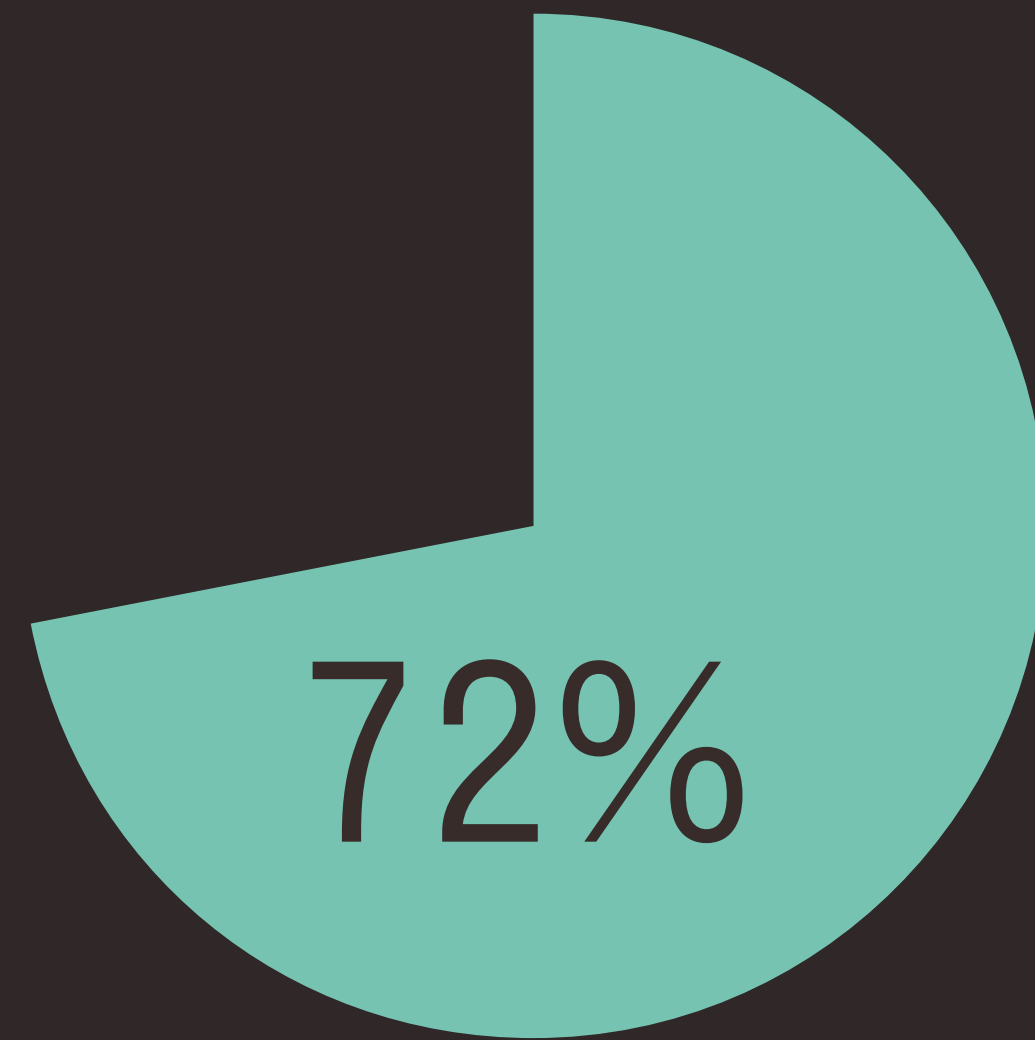
Local authorities can apply Compulsory Purchase Orders (CP0s)⁶ to properties in order to remove dereliction themselves. This process can be completed within just 4 months if the property is already on the Dereliction Register. It does not require the local authority to identify the owner. The owner has 12 months after the CP0 is completed to apply for compensation. The compensation for a CP0 is based on the value of the property recorded in the Dereliction Register minus any unpaid levies, fines and charges for work carried out.

When the CP0s are complete the Council have a legal obligation to put plans in place to remove dereliction on these properties, given they will still be on the Dereliction Register.

6. A CP0 means a Local Authority can take ownership land or property without the consent of the owner but must provide financial compensation to the owner.



are derelict for longer than 2 years



are missing from the Dereliction Registry



6%

of Dereliction Levy was collected



5%

are under CP0

Myth 10

Progress will not happen without new legislation

Busted

Current legislation has potential to bring significant benefits, **if enforced**

The current lack of enforcement of the Dereliction Act is causing many problems, being particularly detrimental to social sustainability and the wellbeing of citizens. If the Act was enforced it would kickstart a reversal of the dereliction epidemic, revitalise the city centre and make a strong statement that local authorities are not willing to accept this level of irresponsibility, putting the needs of the many over the few.

0%

have been given legal obligations to remove dereliction

Dereliction First?

Dereliction has been a problem in Ireland since the foundation of the state. Many Irish Governments have tried to provide local authorities with a legislative framework to remove dereliction by passing numerous Acts, in 1940, 1961 and finally with the current Derelict Sites Act 1990.

Any law is only as good as it's enforcement. The Dereliction Act 'is worded so broadly that it "empowered local authorities to do so much, and also excused them for doing very little".²

There is little doubt that tackling dereliction is not straight forward. It requires committed resources, multidisciplinary skills, collaboration, time and a process rooted in trust, transparency, integrity and respect for the city and its people.

We believe Cork City Council should show proactive leadership, maximising the impact of the tools and measures available, in particular through:

- CPO
- Dereliction Levies
- Legal obligations to remove dereliction

Cork City Council could raise a total of €2.1m annually on 95 properties alone. This was calculated based on the 7% levy being applied to the properties currently on the Dereliction Registry.⁷ Imagine if Cork City Council increased the Dereliction Register to include all the derelict properties within the city boundaries. Especially considering we have identified at least 340 within just 2km of the city centre island.⁸

In 2019, Cork City Council had a collection rate of 30%. If the same collection rate applied in 2020 this would have brought in €627k, instead the collection rate drastically dropped to just 6% with only €140k collected by mid-2020.

To put this €2.1m into perspective, Cork City Council had a budget deficit of €2.5m in 2020, which caused them to increase the Land Property Tax by 7.5% to raise an additional €1.58m.

"One of the earliest and most enduring concerns of Irish local government has been to minimise and control, in the public interest, the impact of ruin and dilapidation on our cities, towns and villages. Derelict sites were to be cleared and rendered aesthetically acceptable not because of their immediate danger to health or safety but because they detracted from our enjoyment, and that of tourists, of our cities."

1998

Pádraig Flynn

Minister for the Environment

7. In addition to the Dereliction Levy, Cork City Council could potentially collect a further €2.1m through the Vacant Site Levy for just 18 sites.
8. In reality, we believe there are closer to 600 derelict properties and vacant sites within 2km of the Cork City centre island, we have only included 340 in this study.
Please note all data in this report is presented as an approximation and is based on publicly available data.
A list of all the derelict properties analysed will be shared with Cork City Council.



“A city’s conserved historic core can **differentiate** that city from competing locations, branding it nationally and internationally, thus helping to attract investment and talented people.”

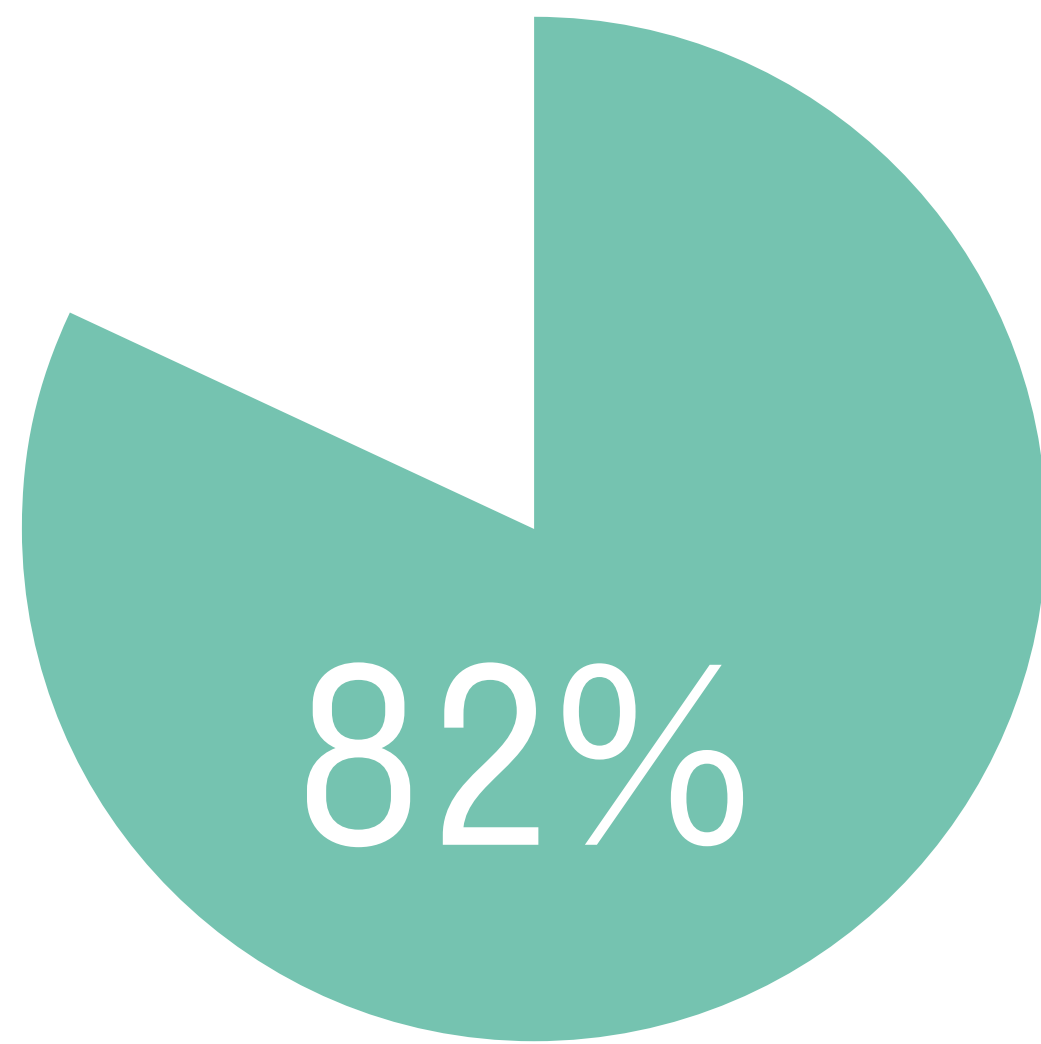
The World Bank

There is no doubt that built heritage gets a raw deal in Ireland and as a result there is a significant loss of economic potential.

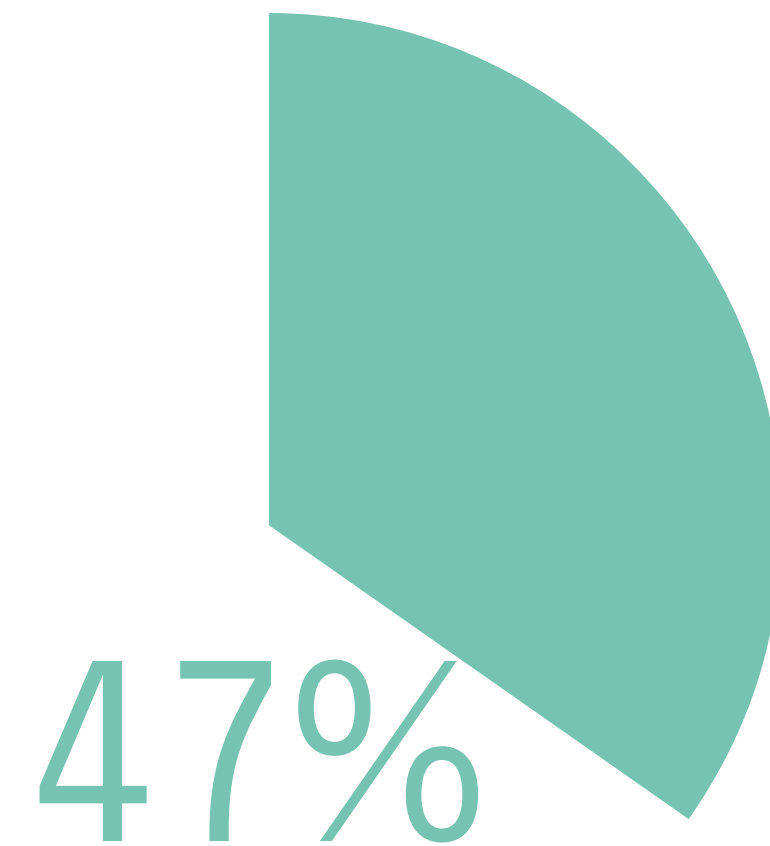
Take Cork City for example, blessed with a unique, rich and arguably priceless built heritage that has evolved with a large variety of styles and design eras. However, sadly much of this is undervalued and at risk of been lost forever. This is due to a lack of understanding of its significance, a lack of strategy, a lack of maintenance and acceptance of dereliction. All avoidable reasons.

100 years ago, Cork City lost a significant proportion of its built heritage in the Burning of Cork. Today we are facing a similar scale of destruction entirely of our own making. Many of Cork City’s historic buildings are crumbling. Between 2019 and 2020 alone, there were 90 incidents of dangerous buildings in the city.

Why are we destroying the uniqueness of Irish towns & cities?



of derelict properties
are estimated to be
over 100 years old



of derelict properties are in
Architectural Conservation Areas



of derelict properties are
in the National Inventory of
Architectural Heritage



of derelict properties are
protected structures



Frank O'Connor

@frank_oconnor

Replying to @frank_oconnor

you need to go up close to the abandoned
@Odlums_Ireland factory to really appreciate it's beauty
& character, 1890s, be an amazing arts, music, cultural,
creative, food venue for all & affordable homes
@corkcitycouncil #socialcrime
#programmeforgovernment #homeless #inequality



5:54 PM · Jul 4, 2020 · Twitter for Android



Frank O'Connor

@frank_oconnor

Replying to @frank_oconnor

50th vacant building recorded on this thread
how beautiful the Butter Exchange is

it has given #Cork so much since 1730s
its unforgivable to see it unloved, unused since 2008

when it should be amazing craft, culture, community,
maker, creative space

#culturalheritage #respect



You and 8 others

12:10 PM · Aug 6, 2020 · Twitter Web App

Case study: Trinity Quarter

The Trinity Quarter is a 1.46 acre 'site' in Cork City Centre that has laid empty for well over a decade but is not on the Derelict Register or the Vacant Site Register.

Located within the South Parish Architecture Conservation Area, it contains the former Brooks Haughton's builders' yard and a number of historically derelict buildings, some of architectural and heritage significance.

The site includes 2 Georgian properties, which combined with 2 others make up the remnants of what was a former terrace built in 1825. Sadly, the 2 on this site have been boarded up for a long time and are now in a serious state of decay.

If the Cork City Council had placed the Trinity Quarter on the derelict list and applied the levy, they would have received a total €2.99m over the last 5 years alone. If the Dereliction Levy went unpaid and was placed as a charge on the properties Cork City Council would have received €1.35 m when Dairygold sold the site in 2019.



Case study: Trinity Quarter

The 'site' and derelict buildings were valued at €20m in 2006 and sold by Wolseley to Dairygold (Alchemy Properties) for €15m in 2008. Planning permission was granted for an office block on the site in 2010 and again in 2015 yet there is no sign that work ever started.

One reason for this may stem from the commercial property strategy of Dairygold, as inferred in their 2018 annual report, which is to maximise an asset's value (through re-zoning and obtaining planning permission) before divesting the asset.

UCC bought the site for €17.25m in 2019 resulting in Dairygold making a profit of over €2m.

Dairygold got a 13.3% return on this investment, as they were able to afford to leave this large city centre site lay derelict, to the detriment of everyone else.

UCC initially set out to invest a further €106m into this new Trinity Quarter, with the help of a state investment of €25m. This will require a new planning application to fulfil UCC's plans to host the university's Business School on this site, initially scheduled for opening at the start of the academic year in 2022 or 2023.

However, with no formal planning application submitted and with the impacts of COVID19 on third level education's revenue streams, it seems unlikely that this new Trinity Quarter will be realised within the next 5 years.



Conclusion

Dereliction should not define the fabric of our urban areas and needs to be eradicated.

Our unhealthy relationship with property in Ireland has led to this dereliction epidemic.

Our investigation dispels 10 of the more common myths around the lack of progress in tackling dereliction.

We can end dereliction and our economy needs this to happen.

Reusing derelict properties and sites will make our urban environments a better place to rest, play and work for everyone.

We wish to acknowledge the wonderful support we've had since we went public last June. It's really given us the energy to keep going.

A sincere thank you.



Who are we?

We are Jude & Frank.

We are the returning diaspora, Jude left Ireland in the '00s, Frank in the '90s. While living in Amsterdam, and looking for a fresh start, we visited Cork city and fell in love with the beauty and uniqueness of the city centre, and in particular the super friendly Corkonians.

We run anois and have an extensive background in research, development and delivery of multi-stakeholder sustainability projects of international excellence, placing us in an ideal place to undertake this in-depth and independent self-funded investigation into dereliction while also offering unbiased insight.

Cork city is now our home. We will continue to do our part to maximise its enormous potential for the benefit of everyone.

Jude Sherry
BDes MSc

Dr. Frank O'Connor
BTech PGCert MTech PhD

March 2021 
anois.org

Over to you

Cork.....

Dublin.....

Galway.....

Limerick.....

Waterford.....

Rest. Play. Work.

If not now, then **when?**

Connect with us

Email us hello@anois.org

Follow [@anoisagency](#)

[@judesherry](#)

[@frank_oconnor](#) on Twitter



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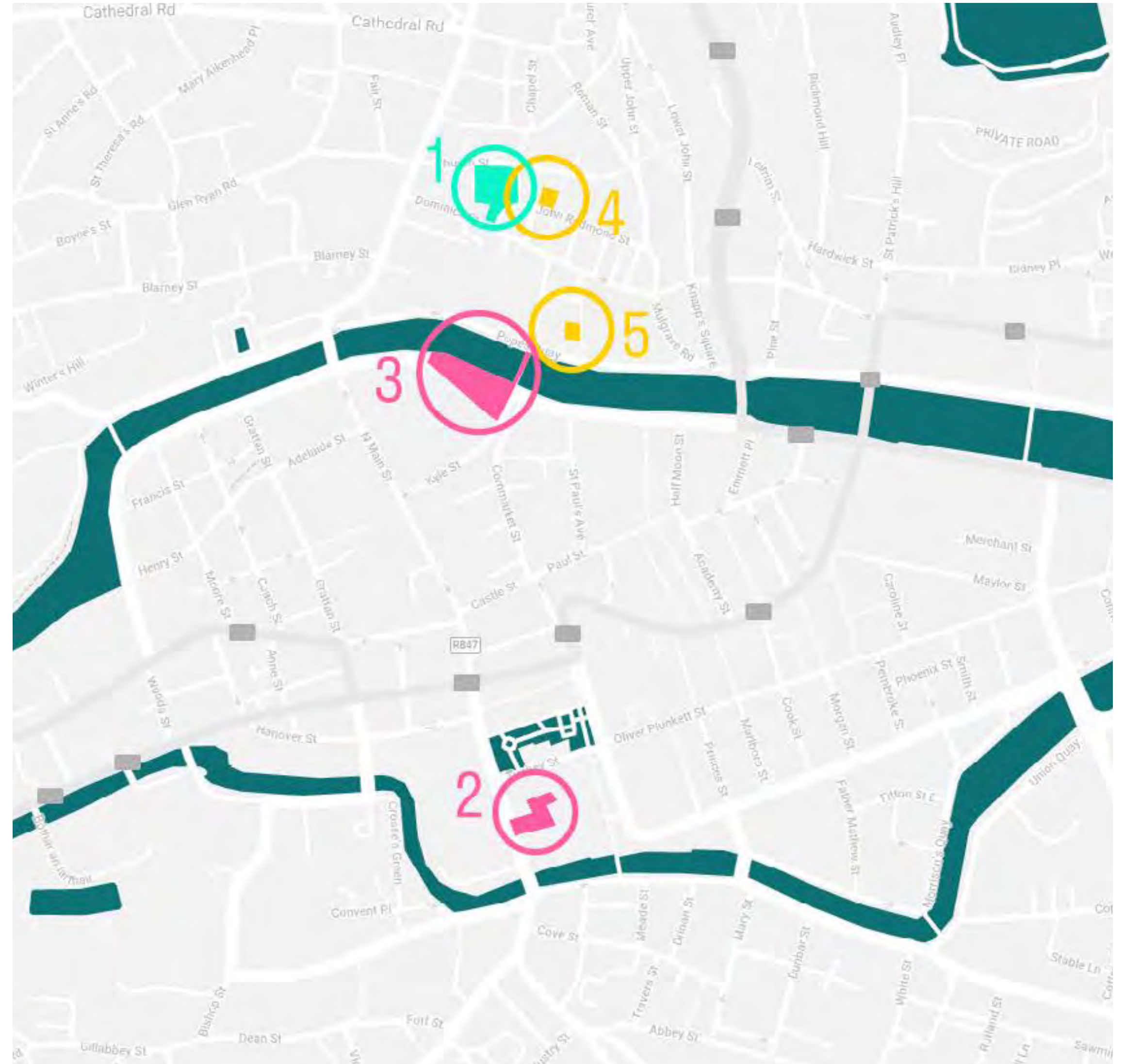
Cork City Centre

Rest. Play. Work.



Imagine...
a city that invites
everyone to
Rest Play Work.

Here we share simple ideas on how to quickly bring 5 long-term derelict sites back to life, for public use, while turning Cork City Centre into a destination.



1

Shandon Work

A 'social innovation food hub' in the Butter Exchange and Weigh-house, focused on a local foundational economy, tourism and responsible entrepreneurship.

Producing indie, ethical, design-led goods and services that are sustainable, circular and responsible (Urban Product Design DNA Manifesto). Based on locally grown food and urban food waste, gathered within 15 km of the city centre.

The hub will be designed around flexible, modular and adaptable spaces and will include co-creation spaces, start-up incubation, vertical food growing, energy and water harvesting, community kitchen, kitchen tool library, community composter, food art, skills sharing and a waste café.

The space will spread beyond the walls of the old Butter Market Exchange to include cycle racks, public seating and car sharing. The hub will bring a whole new dimension to the food capital, having at its foundation a City Manifesto for Urban Scale Manufacturing and a City Manifesto for a Local, Circular, Foundational, Sharing and Collaborative Economy.

We believe that the food capital of Ireland can become the sustainable, circular and responsible food capital of Europe.

2

South Main St. Play

A city playground¹, a place for all ages to play and express themselves. At its foundation a City Play Charter encouraging equality and diversity through putting free and inclusive fun, games, music, arts and culture at the heart of the city.

The playground will be a flexible, modular and adaptable space and will include seating, indigenous trees, edible garden section, public toilets, water fountain, cycle racks and public bins all while encouraging biodiversity.

1. There are no playgrounds on the centre island, the closest is 20 min. walk from core retail streets.



3

Kyrils Quay

Play

A city sanctuary and reflection space filled with art and music that will be flexible, modular and adaptable. It will include seating, indigenous pocket forest, an edible garden with an orchard, opening of existing public toilets (with a rooftop garden/energy and water harvesting), a water fountain, cycle racks and public bins.

The public realm will seamlessly connect with Shandon Bridge, the River Lee and the restored Quays (under a Common Heritage Charter²) bringing far wider benefits to the area.

4

John Redmond St.

Rest Work

A transformation of 2 historic warehouses to homes above shops, that support local, foundational, responsible entrepreneurship.

Retailing indie, ethical design-led goods and services that are sustainable, circular and responsible, these spaces will be flexible, modular and adaptable and will include a roof garden and energy and water harvesting.

5

Ferry Lane

Rest

A cottage that should be handed over to a Social Housing organisation (e.g. Peter McVerry Trust) to provide a home for someone in need of one.

To rest means having a home. Without a home we would all struggle to contribute in any meaningful way to our environment, wider society or have any real sense of place.

2. Based on the Declaration of Amsterdam 1975 and Venice Charter 1964.



We invite Cork City Council to enable these **Rest Play Work** transformations.

These suggested sites are council owned³ and give **Cork City Council an excellent opportunity to lead by example**. They should be redesigned to be fully accessible and adaptable. Repurposing should take a long-term perspective contributing towards a **City Climate Neutral Charter**. This action should start with open calls⁴ on how to best use these spaces for the benefit of all Corkonians.

This is not a new call to action. Cork City is incredibly lucky to be home to so many brilliant creatives, activists and artists campaigning for decades for a liveable city. This is NOW an urgent plea, dereliction has got out of hand in recent years and something needs to change, COVID-19 has amplified the urgency.

Our **Rest Play Work** model is just one way of quickly and cheaply improving the liveability of Cork City, drawing more families to the centre, providing meaningful employment, encouraging investment, all while boosting and strengthening a resilient local economy.

Frank & Jude
October 2020.

3. <https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/63880827/anois-response-to-cork-city-development-plans>

4. Cork City Council need to provide guidance on sustainable KPI's, suitable funding streams, insurance & maintenance agreements, etc.



The possibilities are endless...

If not now, then **when?**

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