



Submission to Cork City Development Plan Consultation 4th October 2021

Cork Equal and Sustainable Communities Alliance (CESCA) is an alliance of eighteen diverse community and voluntary organisations in Cork City, coming together with a common goal of social inclusion and social justice. The alliance partners with and is supported by the HSE Social Inclusion Services in Cork and works to address issues of disadvantage in Cork city. The alliance was established in 2014 to work together across the nine equality grounds and a tenth ground of socio-economic status. This innovative collaboration also aims to progress as well as protect the vast experience and excellent work of these front-line organisations that are at the heart of social inclusion services in Cork City. For more information see CESCA's website www.cesca.ie

CESCA welcomes the opportunity to respond to the next phase of public consultation on the Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028. CESCA as an alliance of community organisations are particularly keen to emphasise the importance of ensuring that Cork city is a city that provides an excellent quality of life for all, particularly the deprived and marginalised communities we support. We support the City of Sanctuary Movement which is committed to making Cork a place of welcome, support and safety for Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants and persons of migrant origin, where diversity is recognised and celebrated.

In our previous submission in August 2020 we focused on accommodation, access to lifelong learning, climate justice and ensuring that Cork is a liveable city for all. CESCA would like to congratulate the Council on the work undertaken in developing the plan and welcomes the fact that the issues we raised have been considered and in many instances included in the Cork City Draft Development Plan 2022–2028. It is very welcome to that the draft plan recognises the importance of social inclusion within Cork and specifically aims to reduce the marginalisation of specific communities within the city, including addressing health inequalities. We particularly welcome the commitments within the plan to work with local communities and other stakeholders to ensure social inclusion remains a cross cutting theme of development within the city. CESCA as a collective of organisations are available to work with and support the Council in their endeavours to deliver an inclusive, equitable and safe city. We particularly note the Council's intention to further integrate social inclusion into the policies, programme activities and services of the council.

At this stage we would like to re-emphasise the points from our earlier submission calling on the Council to:

- Ensure that the number of social housing and low-income units made available reflect population growth and local need;
- Ensure that housing policies reflect and address the specific needs of marginalised communities

In this regard we would like to take this opportunity to draw the Council's attention to some issues arising for the communities we support that we hope can be further integrated and considered in the next phases of the Development Plan:

- **Homelessness:** While we acknowledge much consideration has already been given to anticipating the housing needs of the population of Cork into the future we would encourage the City Council to ensure full consideration is given to the homeless population of the City and commit to the model of providing housing and support to those who have been long term homeless. We also note our support for the recent recommendations from the Simon Communities of Ireland seeking legislative changes in order to ensure the provision of increased protection for those facing eviction and deemed to be at risk of homelessness.¹
- **Direct Provision and Asylum Seekers:** The Report of the Advisory Group on the Provision of Support, including Accommodation, to Persons in the International Protection Process (Day Report) was published in late 2020.² The report makes a series of recommendation to end direct provision and transform the international protection by mid-2023. In the Programme for Government 2020, the Government committed to ending direct provision and replacing it with a new accommodation policy based on a not-for-profit approach. There are a number of recommendations contained in the Day Report that we would encourage the City Council to consider due to their impact on the housing needs of the population of the City going forward. In particular the Day Report recommends that dedicated, ring-fenced funding should be provided to local authorities, on a statutory basis, specifically for housing protection applicants through the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. It also recommends that appropriate accommodation, with additional supports and services, be provided for those identified as victims of trafficking and sexual abuse. We would encourage the City Council to ensure these recommendations and the commitments made in the Programme for Government can be accommodated within the City of Cork going forward.
- **Health Inequalities** As we have previously mentioned within CESCA we have many years of working with marginalised communities in areas of high deprivation. We are acutely aware of the impact that the built and natural environment can have on an individual's quality of life and health outcomes. We were very pleased to see recognition of the Cork Health Cities Action Plan Phase VII 2020-2030 which includes a number of actions relevant to the health and wellbeing of the people in the City and a recognition more broadly of the importance of a good quality of life for all residents in the City. We believe addressing health inequalities requires effective planning and collaboration across the city and we encourage the Council to ensure

¹ <https://www.simon.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/SCI-Proposal-extension-of-notice-periods-for-at-risk-of-homelessness-1.pdf>

² <https://nascireland.org/sites/default/files/Report%20of%20the%20Advisory%20Group%20on%20the%20Provision%20of%20Support%20including%20Accommodation%20to%20Persons%20in%20the%20International%20Protection%20Process.pdf>

this collaborative working is an element of this element of the plan going forward as addressing population health and wellbeing will be largely determined by the policies and actions of all involved in the development and delivery of the Development Plan.

- Traveller Accommodation** CESCA welcome the Council’s commitments to meet the needs of the Traveller Community by implementing the projects defined in the Traveller Accommodation Plan. However, we would encourage the Council to take note of the recent recommendations arising from the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) Equality Review of Traveller Accommodation ³as the recommendations contained therein have implications in terms of planning for and addressing the needs of Travellers in Cork City. In particular the review recommends that further goals be set to extend Traveller-specific accommodation within Cork City, in particular to alleviate the overcrowding in halting sites and that a process of identifying locations for smaller halting sites situated around the city should be progressed. There are also recommendations included in the review regarding the need to address policies and procedure to collect accurate data around the needs and preferences of the Traveller population in Cork and to ensure future plans have a respect for Traveller culture and identity in the provision of accommodation services, specifically in relation to horse ownership
- Social Inclusion** CESCA welcomes the commitments made in Draft Development Plan to support the delivery of the goals, objectives and actions contained within the Local Economic & Community Plan (LECP) 2016-2021 “Pure Cork - An Action Plan for the City” and its successor LECP that is currently under preparation. CESCA has a number of actions in the existing LECP relating to integrating equality and social inclusion into the city. We note that there is no clarity as of yet as to when the next LECP will be reviewed. As a result, we would encourage the Council to expediate this process to ensure that the LECP and Development Plan can compliment each other in facing the ever emerging challenges facing the city in terms of social inclusion, particularly in the aftermath of Covid 19 and the ever changing needs of the population of the City.

We thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the development of the next Cork City Development Plan and we hope we can continue to work in partnership in both the development and delivery of the plan.

CESCA is made up of:



³ https://www.ihrec.ie/app/uploads/2021/07/Cork-City-C-Equality-Review-IHREC_Final.pdf