**Docklands**

The existence of significant public lands in the Docklands requires the prioritisation of the area towards affordable and sustainable residential communities. The need for city centre homes is crucial for cutting across the existing disproportionate planning around hotel & office space. The Docklands landbanks represent the largest open are landbanks to which real planning can assist in preventing the further gentrification of Cork City. This City Development Plan can prevent the errors that has seen many European City Centres transforming into workplaces Monday to Friday and empty outside of work hours. Crucial to this goal is for all workers, particularly lower paid workers, to be able to work and live in the City.

We feel currently that the privitisation of public lands within the Docklands is leading the current draft city development plan and seems resigned to other existing public lands ultimately being handed off to private interests. We reject this and feel is the City Development Plan bases itself off the existing public land remain in public ownership, that much better mix of affordable housing coupled with appropriate amenities is possible.

There is huge potential in the Docklands for the provision of housing. Privatisation will act as a barrier to housing provision on these lands. The danger of an absence of affordable housing and a proliferation of market Build-To-Rent developments will essentially lock working people out of the Docklands and feed gentrification significantly. What is necessary is a steady flow of quality, affordable housing for people in the years to come and only a public housing model can achieve this by ruling out the profit motive and potential speculation or overuse of lands for hotel and student accommodation as we’ve seen in the city.

There is precedent for social housing construction on the scale that is necessary to end housing crisis. In 1975, a third of all housing builds in Ireland were carried out by local authorities compared to just 4% in 2015. More recently, if using figures of actual new builds as opposed to housing” deliveries”, only 30000 homes were delivered in the lifetime of the “Rebuilding Ireland”, with most figures cited within its figures delivered through various alternative mechanisms such as HAP, social housing leasing, refurbishment etc.

The Draft Plan currently recognises the potential of the area, stating it could become an exemplar for sustainable urban living.

We feel the current plans however yield too much ground to “Mixed Use Development” which contradicts the goal of sustainable urban living.

Analysis of trends over the course of the previous City Development Plan and in the private market shows a severe market reluctance to build the mid-rise residential builds necessary to address the pent-up housing needs in the city and to make the Docklands sustainable. The proliferation of Mixed Use Zoning in these areas will inevitably lend itself more towards commercial building. We feel there needs to be a significant increase in lands zoned as New Residential Neighbourhoods and Sustainable Neighbourhoods respectively. The Development Plan must be look at in the context of the reality of the market forces that has created the housing crisis. Given more than a decade of lost construction, its crucial this plan weighs heavier on the need for homes and not facilitating an inevitable shift towards more short-term profitable projects like hotels, office space and student accommodation in the wake of large-scale institutional investment which has created huge market distortion.

As such, shifts more from Residential, Low/Medium to Residential Medium/Upper Density, particularly in Tivoli Docks, could facilitate more medium rise developments, encouraging away from disastrous large scale “Build to Rent” developments which have shown, particularly in Dublin, to have a detrimental affect on increasing already crisis level market rents. Increasing areas of Medium-Taller Building Zones could also assist in creating more spaces in easily accessible areas that will in turn encourage alternative modes of transportation away from car centric living.

Additionally, opening the Docklands to the public is a crucial goal. This goes beyond the existing walkways and cycle lanes that stretch alongside areas of the Docklands. The Docklands already represent an important outdoor public space, used particularly in the summer months by hundreds, if not thousands, of people to enjoy the city and the quays. We feel there needs to be significant zoning to increase the amount of area, particularly quayside area, as Public Open Space to protect the right to access of the river and also to help build future amenities.

Any residential development on the Docklands, which is vital for the future prosperity of Cork City and to keep up with shifting population changes, has a unique opportunity to encourage people to shift towards a more sustainable method of travel.

**Sustainable Transport**

The urgency to shift modes of transport away from motor vehicles has never been more urgent. Prioritisation of cyclists and public transportation is crucial for the future of the Docklands. The need for robust investment into regular, accessible and affordable train and bus service is clear. This is particularly urgent given the overcapacity issues of the N40 South Ring Road, an issue that has been ongoing for the guts of a decade and worsening. The 2018 report showed up to 40% overcapacity and as much as an excess of 80000 journeys daily on the road. This is certain to have increased significantly since.

Given the close connection any Dockland development, residential or otherwise, will have to the South Ring Road, it is essential that planning has a large orientation towards the development of existing public transportation links.

With projected population in Cork City predicted to hit 770,000 by 2040 and Cork on track to being the fastest growing city in Ireland for the next 20 years, current infrastructure will require significant room to keep pace with expected growth. Room for light rail and other modes of transportation are crucial and linking areas of the Dockland to encourage walking a must.

**Blarney**

The former Blarney Park Hotel has been a space of long-term dereliction for many years in Blarney. The site currently consists of 8.58 acres with access to mains sewers and water. The site has been acknowledged in the Draft City Development Plan as an area of strategic importance to the town and that despite its vacancy, its redevelopment is paramount to sustaining Blarney as a prime tourist attraction.

We feel the existing development plan does not see Blarney in its totality and that the efforts to rezone this site as an Area as a Proposed ACA is indicative of an approach that ignores the reality of Blarney also being home to thousands of people and communities who have needs outside of facilitating private tourism.

Blarney has a very low number of supporting amenities for a town of its size. The town is not currently serviced by any larger retail supermarket, relying on two local Centra’s owned by the same person and therefore seeing local prices higher than the average as a result. Having consulted with the local community on the question of the former Blarney Park Hotel site and attempts to establish a Lidl, we faced overwhelming support for the site to be used as such as well as firm criticism of the lack of local options, job opportunities for young people.

Additionally, there are also environmental concerns related to a lack of a large food retailer in the area. With a population of thousands in the local area, the vast majority are forced to drive to Blackpool Shopping Centre or beyond to do daily or weekly shopping. This represents a significant increase in congestion and pollution, and also forces every household to rely on private transportation. This reality disincentivises the urgent need to expand public transport options to the area.

The large concentration of private ownership of Blarney Village represents quite a concern given this ownership is almost entirely sustained by tourism. While the beauty and heritage of Blarney should be protected, we don’t feel a food outlet necessarily conflicts with this goal if done in a sensitive way. Rezoning this land essentially ends the possibility of Lidl or another large food outlet from setting up in this area and forcing it into for profit tourism, something which broadly does not help most residents of Blarney.

Blarney cannot be separated from its reality as a living town with people who have needs. Viewed in a framework of solely tourism dismisses the needs of thousands of people. We oppose the rezoning of this landbank to Proposed ACA.

Additionally, we support residents of Sunberry Drive and Heights in their will to have lands at the back of these areas rezoned to Z021 City Hinterland away from the current zoning for Residential Neighbourhoods. The original rezoning of this land to residential housing remains to me a very poorly justified decision. The fact that it was taken outside of the original City Development Plan and with no consultation with key stakeholders justifies its return to a zoning that is suitable to the area.

The 2009 planning refusal for these lands are particularly noteworthy, specifically the need for a material contravention at the time and which residents had no say in terms of arguing against the use of the land away from its intended purpose and the hazards the high terrain and difficult access represents.

**Tower**

The absence of any significant zoning to assist in the improvement of local roads infrastructure in Tower is a large oversight, and something we feel is in need to added attention. Despite aesthetic upgrades, the roads from Blarney through to Tower remain incredibly dangerous, inclined towards damage with zero safe pedestrian or cycling options. For the population to have to do with what is essentially rural roads cannot continue to be the case for the next five years.

There needs to be significant path widening to allow proper lighting, footpath and protected cycle lanes to be prioritised over the next five years.

**Mayfield**

We strongly concur with the joint submissions from Saint Joseph’s Community Association and Mayfield East Community Association and their calls for the larger area to be included as area of regeneration to assist the significant challenges facing the community.

There is a high concentration of extremely poorly maintained social housing because of council neglect that is already a crisis in terms of the numbers of tenants living in housing not suitable to their needs nor safe for their ongoing health. Catagorising Mayfield as a regeneration zone, coupled with appropriate funding, could be an opportunity to significantly increase the amenities and public facilities in the community which are currently notably minimal in comparison to the population density of the surrounding area.

Additionally, we support Mayfield East Community Association in their calls for to develop a site in their possession for provision of community services and facilities and call on Cork City Council to provide support and commitment to the project going forward.

Crucial towards facilitating the large growth in Mayfield that has already occurred and that will increase over the lifetime of the development plan, it is urgent that better public transport networks and infrastructure is a priority for the area over the coming years. The northside in general has been poorly served in terms of new cycling infrastructure also, and Mayfield would be served well by a particular focus on providing connected cycle lanes from the City Center.

We support calls for the area to be included within any future light rail development as well as the reopening of the former Tivoli terminal.

The North Ring Road has been poorly maintained over the years. The lack of upkeep of road signage and road markings is a symptom of this neglect. The absence of greenery or trees to attempt to counteract the poor air quality because of traffic is a concern. Comparison to the South Ring Road, there is little development or mitigation of the issues raised by the road. There is a good deal of residential accommodation which faces the worst of the congestion issues and air problems but very little of anything else. Particularly useful would be the inclusion of all-weather playing pitches as part of an overall development.

Mayfield has huge potential to lead the way as an example of what can be done to repair historic mismanagement and under resourcing of working-class communities, if the political and economic will is behind it.

**Blackpool**

We agree with the catagorising of Blackpool into an area of regeneration. Blackpool will have a significant population increase over the next five years as large and medium scale social housing developments are build, which will see an influx of thousands into the Blackpool Village/Dublin Hill area. There are currently no amenities or infrastructure to support this increase for children.

Up until recently, Blackpool has had an aging population. This is set to change dramatically. The current infrastructure and amenities will not be sufficient to provide safe areas for play. The only green space in the entirety of the area is in private ownership within the Blackpool Retail District and is regularly not accessible at bank holidays or weekends. Blackpool needs a public green space urgently.

The absence of Cycling infrastructure is an own goal thus far. Blackpool is easily accessible by cycling or foot to town, is flatland in comparison to much of the northside and the village would be well served by the Bikes scheme. Unfortunately, Blackpool has been left largely absent from cycling network plans. The population, both as it is now and into the future, is perfectly placed to encourage alternative modes of transport of care and funding is put into the roads to facilitate it.

Particularly crucial to the goals of ensuring Blackpool as a community can thrive in the future is facilitating the return of foot traffic to the village. Placing the public library away from its current locations over a bookies in the shopping center and to the village would be a great first step.

Signage will be important and something community representatives have been working to get for some time. Returning a sense of identity to the Village which has been marked by years of neglect and dereliction and the least that can be done to assist this is providing quality signage that exists throughout the city and in towns were there is a village center.

Crucial to the future of the village is the existing plans to culvert over the River Bride. The River Bride is an important spot of beauty and wildlife and represents the only proper bit of greenery in the Village surrounds. The flooding issue was exacerbated by years of poor maintenance by council of flood grates, this has been well documented at this point. Alternative works that don’t add up to such a catastrophic loss of crucial environment is available and at similar costs as per the OPW’s original options. The only benefit at the time for the culvert was cost which has since ballooned and therefore there is nothing supporting the existing plans except expediency.

Additionally, there is doubt as to whether insurance companies will even consider the flood relief in Blackpool as sufficient to return coverage.

We need to protect what greenery we have in Blackpool, not cover it up in cement as a quick fix that isn’t even the best or cheapest solution.

**Derelict Sites**

The scourge of dereliction must be addressed and maximum penalties be applied to those who run down our cities and town. It is crucial that Cork City Council lead the way in tackling dereliction and to not measure its success off other local authorities.

The measure of success must always be based upon the number of derelict sites successfully brought into good use. Full penalties available to the council should be pursued, this includes providing additional resources to do the practical work to ensure hoarding of derelict property is addressed.

**City Flood Defense**

We fully support the submission from the Group ‘Save Cork City’ and their document submitted in collaboration with Dr. Declan Jordan of the UCC School Of Economics.

Cork needs a Tidal Barrier. When the Lower Lee Flood Relief scheme was originally devised, it was acknowledged by the OPW that a tidal barrier would be necessary within 50 years. That was well over a decade ago and optimistic view of climate change is no longer on the cards. It’s likely that a tidal barrier will now be necessary much sooner and with the need to develop the Docklands, a Tidal Barrier is they key solution necessary to protect the city for decades to come.

Submission completed by Solidarity – The Left Alternative

Mick Barry TD

Councillor Fiona Ryan