

Submission New Development Plan 2022 -2028

Delivering Homes and Successful Neighbourhoods

Over Concentration of Student Accommodation in our Area

The New Development Plan needs to address the serious imbalance between owner occupied housing 30% and private rental housing 70% in the Magazine Rd/ Glasheen Rd/College Rd and surrounding parks and roads. This has resulted in a huge over concentration of students living in the area which makes it very difficult to maintain the character of the area.

This is in complete contrast to what the Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028 Stage 1: Pre-plan Consultation Issues Paper states: The housing tenure shows a housing stock in Cork of owner occupied housing 58%, private rental 24%.

The Core Strategy of the New Plan states that it will set out key locations for the future developments that provide the right mix for an area. Yet under the present plan our area has been allowed to become a student ghetto with some sections completely devoid of residents. This is due to poor planning legislation and poor enforcement of existing planning legislation, which allows landlords purchase 2/3 bedroom residential terraced properties and subdivide rooms along with building extensions and convert them into 6/7/8/9 bedroom commercial properties. The New Plan must address this serious destruction of the character of the area. In addition to the multi- occupancy properties, planned PBSAs for the area will lead to a total over concentration of student accommodation, with the area losing its identity, heritage and character.

Another key objective of the New Plan, states that it is to ensure that each neighbourhood is an attractive place to live, work and interact. Again this is in total contrast to what exists in this area at present, with rundown and badly maintained rented properties, litter strewn around front gardens and permanent residents afraid to venture out after dark due to the huge antisocial behavioural problem with drink and drug fuelled young people roaming the streets in search of house parties.

In the interest of Sustainable Communities, the New Plan must include initiatives to encourage working couples and families back into this area. An over concentration of student accommodation hinders the development of a sustainable community.

Stage 1: Pre-plan consultation - Issues Paper also states that investment in the regeneration and consolidation of the city suburbs will require a range of well planned mixed use urban renewal projects that fully integrate high quality, architectural and urban design responses to achieve sustainable development that properly reflects the existing characteristics of these neighbourhoods.

Again the present plan has totally failed on this, allowing the heritage and character be destroyed by lack of policy and lack of enforcement. The New Plan must include proactive policies by City Council in regenerating, retaining and policing the area to

preserve its heritage. Part of the area is classed as an Architectural Conservation Area and yet walking through the area it is obvious that nothing is being done by City Council to protect this status with beautiful old wrought iron railing and gates removed and replaced with open entrances without any permission being sought or granted.

Stage 1: Pre-plan consultation - Issues Paper Part 10.1 states that Creating successful neighbourhoods is a key aim of the planning system, which is focused as much on the quality of homes and placemaking as it is on ensuring the right quantity of homes are provided. This is supported by integrated planning and the use of placemaking to create socially sustainable communities and environments all of which enable high standards of quality of life that are as environmentally sustainable as location and standards allow. The Development Plan will aim to ensure that the right civic and community infrastructure is provided and ambitious development standards are applied to enable the creation of successful neighbourhoods and a city that is truly 'liveable'. It also states its commitment to work with existing communities in neighbourhoods to collectively identify improvements necessary to ensure that all parts of the City benefit from high standards of liveability.

The present plan has failed miserably in this aim in that despite constant correspondence, requests, and meetings with City Council, there is no evidence that this area is supported by integrated planning to create socially sustainable communities. There is no commitment to the existing community. In reality a blind eye is being shown to this area with nothing being done to prevent the area being completely overrun by rundown rented properties, PBSAs and the destruction of a sustainable community.

The New Development Plan states as its aims: A city of strong communities, with liveable neighbourhoods and an excellent quality of life. An attractive built environment at a human scale. A child friendly and age friendly environment with a mix of household types. A safe neighbourhood enabling access for all.

The present plan has again failed in these aims with the area being neglected and in need of urgent regeneration. We have no evidence from City Council in achieving any of the above.

It is vital that City Council include a policy of addressing the imbalance of private rented properties and owner occupied properties in the area, which has led to this over concentration of students living in the area. The renting of multi occupancy houses(formerly residential) is a commercial enterprise and should be treated as such with planning required similar to someone opening a hair salon in a room in a house. This problem began some years ago with a small number of houses on College Rd and Highfield Ave being purchased by landlords and it has now reached the stage over ten years later with large sections of the area being completely owned by landlords who have no loyalty to anything other than the rent they collect. The problem of multi occupancy houses is now spreading well beyond the area we represent and into Hartlands Avenue, the Lough, Kilcrea Park and Liseaux Park,

Bandon Road, Barrack Street and the Mardyke. This may require legislative changes at both local and national level especially with a view to the licensing of landlords and criteria to be met before properties can be rented. However, failure to act will create a complete student ghetto in the south west of the city.

The sustainability and character of the area is in danger unless the New Development Plan includes a regeneration plan and a complete rethink on future student accommodation. We made a submission re the proposed Variation No. 5(Student Accommodation) to the Cork City Development Plan in May 2018, much of which is very relevant today and into the future. We would ask City Council to re-examine this submission as part of the consultation process.