



## 11.0 THE TOWN PLANNING CONTEXT

### 11.1 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The following key points illustrate the strategic locational context of Ballymun:

- Proximate location with easy road access to M50 and M1 Motorways, Dublin Airport and Dublin Port, (upon completion of the Dublin Port Tunnel link) and the industrial areas associated with those transport nodes.
- Location along proposed LRT corridor linking Dublin City Centre, Tallaght, Dundrum and Ballymun.
- Only some 5 miles from Dublin City Centre.
- Close to Dublin City University campus. Dublin City University has expanded rapidly over the years and is now a major population node, with a student body of just under 4,000 persons and a staff level of 300 approximately.

The Ballymun Regeneration area represents the largest single land area with the potential for rejuvenation in the Dublin area. This Masterplan seeks to take advantage of the strategic importance of Ballymun in terms of the aspects noted above so as to provide a soundly based strategy for the redevelopment of Ballymun.

### 11.2 Dublin Transportation Initiative

The Dublin Transportation Initiative – Phase 2 (DTI) Final Report, adopted by Government in 1994, details a Recommended Strategy of Integrated Land Use and Transportation for the Dublin Sub Region. The DTI region comprises the contiguous built-up area of Dublin including parts of Kildare, Wicklow and Meath.

The DTI land use planning priorities to facilitate important employment and regional economic objectives are particularly relevant to the rejuvenation of Ballymun. These are described in Section 9.1.2 of the Final Report as follows:

- to encourage economic development and regeneration;
- to consolidate existing business and industry;
- to attract new investment and stimulate growth in tourism;
- to provide physical access to all job opportunities, particularly for the unemployed.

Another important factor identified in the DTI Final Report is the likely capacity of the DTI Study Area to attract job creating development in the future. The DTI analysis records that employment in the general Airport area is likely to increase and that completion of the C-Ring Motorway, and other DTI proposals, will add to the attraction of the area to the north of Dublin for major development. These factors have had an important role to play in shaping the land use proposals for Ballymun.

The DTI study outlines a number of key strategic land use planning recommendations including the following:

- encouraging higher density development along strategic public transport corridors in development areas;
- avoiding the C-Ring becoming a focus for retail and leisure development;
- addressing the job creating and development potential of the Study Area in the light of the above factors.

The rejuvenation of Ballymun in terms of both its housing stock and the planned increase in employment opportunities and improvement of the overall socio-economic wellbeing of the area is consistent with the aims and objectives of the Dublin Transportation Initiative, Phase 2, Final Report, 1994.

### 11.3 Sustainable Development: A Strategy for Ireland

This document was published by the Department of Environment in 1997. The principal purpose of the Strategy is stated to be to provide a comprehensive analysis and framework which will allow sustainable development to be taken forward more systematically in Ireland.

The report notes the importance of land use planning to the development of a Sustainable Development Strategy. This importance is manifested in a number of ways such as, efficiency in the use of energy and transport through the careful location of residential, commercial and industrial development and controls in the shape, structure and size of settlements. The Strategy records that planning and development legislation will be amended to require Planning Authorities expressly to take account of sustainable development considerations in the elaboration of their Development Plans.

#### 11.3.1 Urban Regeneration

The Sustainable Strategy states, with regard to urban regeneration, that:

*“Returning land and buildings to active use in itself meets sustainable objectives: it reuses available resources, contributes to energy efficiency, sustains the urban fabric, reduces the need to develop greenfield sites and protects the countryside.”*

The rejuvenation of Ballymun by reusing the existing land bank is, in itself, a sustainable development and therefore accords with the above National Strategy.

Key policies contained in the Development Strategy for achieving sustainable urban regeneration of the built environment include:

- Integrated strategic economic and social planning to link measures and programmes for urban renewal on an integrated basis to address the physical, economic, social and environmental regeneration of urban areas.

This particular aspect has been a key feature of the Ballymun Regeneration Project which has given rise to this Masterplan. An Integrated Area Plan has also been prepared with a view to gaining tax incentive status for areas of Ballymun. The planning of the regeneration process has been carried out on an integrated basis.

- Improving accessibility of areas in need of regeneration which tend to be isolated from mainstream activities in cities and towns: good public transport linkages are particularly important in this regard.

In this regard the Masterplan has been designed so as to facilitate the introduction of the Dublin LRT – LUAS into Ballymun and to maximise the catchment population accessible to the LRT network.

- Design flexibility so that buildings are designed or adapted in a way which allows for as many uses, and as much flexibility of use, as practicable. Sustainable urban regeneration also requires a high degree of flexibility in the application of zoning and planning policies.

The design of the proposed buildings within the Ballymun Regeneration area, especially in the Main Street, will be as adaptable and flexible as practicable.

- Open Spaces: from a sustainable perspective there is need for a new emphasis on the environmental and ecological, in addition to the traditional social and amenity, roles of open spaces within the urban fabric.

This open space hierarchy of Ballymun was assessed and proposals are put forward as part of this Masterplan to achieve a sustainable pattern and hierarchy of open spaces.

- The importance of the partnership approach, and the inclusion of ecological principles and environmental upgrading are also cited as key elements of sustainable regeneration.

This particular aspect of sustainability has been an integral part of the whole regeneration process in Ballymun.

### 11.3.2 Sustainable Housing

In relation to housing, the concept of sustainability is stated as having a social, as well as an environmental dimension. Positive measures to counteract social segregation and to promote tenant participation and involvement are described as contributing to this social dimension.

This is a key aspect to the Masterplan for Ballymun. Social integration within the estate and with regard to its neighbouring districts is provided by offering residents choice of tenure. (Corporation tenancy, shared ownership, co-operative, voluntary housing association, private rented, private ownership), and by introducing speculative housing for sale sites into the area.

The report specifically mentions the circa £180m. investment, as announced by the Minister for the Environment and the Minister for Housing and Urban Renewal in March 1997, as the central element in an integrated strategic plan for the economic and social development of Ballymun.

## 11.4 STATUTORY PLANNING CONTEXT

**11.4.1** The Ballymun Regeneration Area falls within two administrative areas; Dublin Corporation and Fingal County Council. The current Statutory Development Plans for these areas are the Dublin City Development Plan, 1991 and the Dublin County Development Plan, 1993 respectively. The Draft Dublin City Development Plan 1998 has recently been published.

#### 11.4.2 1991 Dublin City Development Plan/Draft Dublin City Development Plan 1998

The majority of the Ballymun area within Dublin County Borough has the zoning objective ‘O’; “to seek the social, economic and physical rejuvenation of the area”. This zoning objective was recently adopted as a Variation of the 1991 City Development Plan. The ‘O’ land use zoning objective replaced Residential, General Industrial, Business and Service Centre and Agriculture zoning objectives, within the same area.

The adoption of this zoning allows for flexibility in drawing up the Masterplan and IAP. The Ballymun Industrial Estate and Poppintree Industrial Estate remain zoned ‘E’, “to provide for industrial and related uses”.

In addition, some 16 hectares of agricultural land were re-zoned to Objective ‘E1’, “to provide for the creation and protection of enterprise and facilitate opportunities for employment creation”, in accordance with the designation of the site as an Enterprise Area under the 1997 Finance Act.

#### Relevant Policies - 1991 Dublin City Development Plan

It is the policy of Dublin Corporation to encourage a more intensive use of residentially zoned lands along certain radial arterial routes that are well served by buses, and in the vicinity of transport termini. It is also Dublin Corporation policy to seek to ensure that the built up areas of Dublin City will have an integrated transportation system which will be consistent with national transport policies.

With reference to existing areas with the zoning objective ‘O’, the 1991 Development Plan states that while these areas have many problems, “they also must be seen as areas affording an opportunity to rejuvenate communities, the physical fabric and restore economic activity”.

The Draft Dublin City Development Plan 1998 has been adopted by the City Council and is going on public display in April 1998. The Plan specifically refers to the regeneration of Ballymun and the aim of the project to develop Ballymun as a town which caters for all local needs attracts public and private investment, provides employment and secures a better mix of housing in a rejuvenated physical environment. The zoning of the area remains, “to seek the social, economic and physical rejuvenation of the area” and the policies relating to housing, transportation, shopping and the outer city present an approach with which the Masterplan concurs.

#### 11.4.3 1993 Dublin County Development Plan

The dominant land use zones of the Ballymun Regeneration Area located in Fingal County are ‘F’-To preserve and provide for open space and recreational amenities’, and E -‘To provide for industrial and related uses’. It also includes a small area zoned for agricultural use.

As part of the Poppintree Enterprise Area, in conjunction with the lands in Dublin County Borough, lands at Poppintree, zoned for ‘general industrial’ use are proposed to be re-zoned to ‘H’ ‘To provide for creation and protection of enterprise and facilitate opportunities for employment creation’. In addition, a draft variation of the 1993 County Development Plan is proposed for Santry Demesne, which increases the area of industrial, residential and commercial land in part of that area.

BRL have made a submission to Fingal County Council regarding this draft variation and welcoming its general thrust but suggesting amendments to ensure that development does not detract from the development of Ballymun Town Centre, that green linkages are consolidated and that residential development is introduced along Santry Avenue to complement the development on the Ballymun side of the road.

#### Specific Objectives

Relevant 1993 County Development Plan objectives include examining Santry Demesne with a view to its inclusion in the list of Areas of Scientific Interest, to consider the area for a Special Amenity Area Order, and to seek to bring Santry Demesne into public ownership in conjunction with Dublin Corporation. The Draft Variation for Santry Demesne seeks to remove these specific objectives and replace them with a number of conservation/amenity objectives.

#### Relevant Policies-1993 Dublin County Development Plan

It is the policy of the Council to promote, and facilitate the provision of a balanced and integrated transportation system for the County Dublin area. This includes the provision of park and ride facilities. The DTI strategy is referred to as a potential strategic document in implementing the council’s transport objectives. It is also council policy that local neighbourhood facilities and activities, should be located within walking distance of peoples’ homes.

It is policy to facilitate the operation and development of Dublin Airport in co-operation with the Department of Transport and Aer Rianta and to control development in the vicinity to ensure its safe and efficient operation. It is also policy to encourage and facilitate the development of a rail link to Dublin Airport and Swords.

## 11.5 CURRENT DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

**11.5.1** Within Dublin County Borough, planning applications during the last five years have mainly been for small domestic extensions to existing dwellings, reflecting the mature residential land use structure of much of the area. Planning permission has been granted in virtually all cases. There were a number of modest commercial development proposals in relation to several of the units at Ballymun Shopping Centre including alterations to shopfronts, and changes of use or subdivision/extension of units. Also, of note is a permission granted for a two storey day nursery on lands adjacent to the Holy Spirit Girls School.

A number of planning permissions for industrial/storage uses were granted by Dublin Corporation in the Poppintree and Ballymun Industrial Estates, including a decision to grant permission for a Concrete Mix Batching Plant. This application at Ballymun Industrial Estate is currently under appeal to An Bord Pleanala.

Within the corresponding Fingal County Council area, applications recorded over the last five years have been principally of a storage/distribution nature and largely located within the established industrial estates in the area (Airways Industrial Estate, Furry Park Industrial Estate, Woodlawn Industrial Estate, Unidare Industrial Estate and Jamestown Industrial Park). A number of applications for hotel accommodation were also recorded with a few developments getting permission in the Baleskin area close to the Finglas Interchange of the M50 Motorway and at the junction of the M50 and Ballymun Road.

Developments of note include, a decision to grant permission for a paper and textile sorting and recycling plant at Ballymun Road (20th October 1997). This is currently on appeal to An Bord Pleanala. Also, Fingal County Council made a decision to grant permission for a large scale proposal for site development works relating to a future warehousing/light industrial/ancillary offices development on a site of 36.7 acres, at St. Anne’s, Ballymun Road (24th October 1997).

## 11.6 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

**11.6.1** The legislative requirements relating to Environmental Impact Statements are contained in the European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations, 1989 and 1994, together with the Local Government (Planning & Development) Regulations, 1994, as amended.

Any development that exceeds a threshold set out in S.I. No. 349 of 1989 will have an Environmental Impact Statement prepared and this will be submitted with any planning application. In addition where a proposal falls within a development category but is below the threshold required, but in the opinion of the Planning Authority an Environmental Impact Statement is necessary, one will be prepared and submitted with the planning application.

To commence the formulation of an E.I.S. the scope of a Strategic Environmental Assessment has been prepared. The provisional assessment of the sustainability of the current Masterplan is set out in Section 31.

## 11.7 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

**11.7.1** Planning applications for each aspect of the proposed regeneration of Ballymun will be lodged with Dublin Corporation and Fingal County Council, as appropriate, as the Planning Authorities for the Ballymun Regeneration Area in accordance with the Local Government (Planning & Development) Acts 1963 to 1993 and the statutory regulations made thereunder. In addition, an Environmental Impact Statement will accompany each planning application where this is required by the European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations, 1989, or where one is specifically requested by the Planning Authority.

In this regard it is envisaged that the first planning application will be made in 1998.