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Supporting Sustainable Communities: The Successful Provision of Infrastructure in Cherrywood



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Supporting Sustainable Communities: The Successful Provision of Infrastructure in Cherrywood

“Investing in social capital is investing in the future of our society” – Robert Putnam

Introduction

Social spaces and infrastructure are essential components of sustainable developments and sustainable communities. Ensuring adequate infrastructure provision in large-scale developments has been a key policy challenge to ensure placemaking in new communities. Cherrywood, located in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council (DLRCC), serves as an example of a well-planned, large-scale development where infrastructure has been effectively integrated.

When complete, Cherrywood will be the largest Strategic Development Zone (SDZ)¹ in the history of the State. As the largest undeveloped landbank in the DLRCC Area and the largest of all eleven SDZ projects in Ireland, Cherrywood SDZ presents unique challenges, particularly in coordinating significant infrastructure across multiple landowners. Notably, the planning application for the new Mixed-Use Town Centre was among the largest in the State’s history at the time. This Housing Insights Paper examines the progressive steps taken by DLRCC and its key stakeholders to ensure that infrastructure is plan-led, phased and strategically provided to support Cherrywood’s development in County Dublin.

Insights

Having a dedicated project team as a point of contact supports the activation and progression of large-scale developments involving multiple stakeholders

Collaboration and early engagement with stakeholders are both crucial in large-scale developments

Aligning the delivery of essential infrastructure with residential development ensures that vital services and amenities are available when new residents move in

While the Cherrywood Planning Scheme does not prescribe specific timelines for infrastructure delivery, certain enabling infrastructure elements, such as schools, open spaces and transport infrastructure are prioritised

¹ Strategic Development Zones (SDZs) were established in the Planning and Development Act 2000. SDZs are areas of land designated by the Government for development that is considered to be of social or economic importance.

What was the issue?

The concept of sustainable communities is defined in the Bristol Accord as:

‘Places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment, and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run, and offer equality of opportunity and good services for all’.²

Under the Bristol Accord, a key characteristic of a sustainable community is being environmentally sensitive. This means fostering a harmonious relationship between residents and the environment while balancing economic, social and environmental factors in urban planning and development. The Bristol Accord holds mixed tenure as a crucial element of sustainable communities, promoting facilities that encourage social interaction between individuals from different backgrounds. Additionally, it advocated for user-friendly public and green spaces with facilities for everyone, including children and older people.

Social spaces and infrastructure play a key role in Irish policy on sustainable communities, as reflected in Housing for All. Section 5.6 highlights the importance of “Critical Infrastructure Development” to the success of placemaking and sustainable communities within developments in Ireland. This is further reinforced under the plan’s final pathway, Supporting the Four Pathways: Enabling a Sustainable Housing System, which underscores the broader importance of sustainability in housing development.

The Cherrywood Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) was designed as a “10-minute neighbourhood”, in line with Policy Objective PHP4 of DLRCC’s County Development Plan³. The concept builds on the “15-minute city” concept popularised by Carlos Moreno, wherein a resident’s needs can be fulfilled by travelling within 15 minutes of their home and builds in several key elements of a sustainable community.⁴ The “10-minute neighbourhood” concept has been trialled in Carlow, Ennis and Tralee previously, and seeks to reduce car dependency by having community facilities, services and amenities accessible within a 10-minute walk or cycle from the individual’s home.⁵ This approach is evident in Cherrywood through the provision of infrastructure such as public parks, playing fields, active modes of travel, childcare facilities, schools, employment spaces and multiple village centres across the development, reducing the travel time for residents to access basic infrastructure. Notably, when the Cherrywood Planning Scheme was being drafted, the 10-minute neighbourhood concept had not yet been formalized. DLRCC demonstrated foresight and innovative sustainable planning by incorporating these principles into its sustainable planning well ahead of their wider adoption.

2 Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. (2005). *Conclusions of Bristol Ministerial Informal Meeting on Sustainable Communities in Europe: Bristol Accord*. London: ODPM.

3 Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. (2024). *County Development Plan 2022-2028*.

4 Moreno, C. (2024). *The 15-Minute City: A Solution to Saving Our Time and Our Planet*. Wiley.

5 Southern Regional Assembly. (2020). *10 Minute Towns: Accessibility & Framework Report*.

Cherrywood SDZ serves as a good practice example for future urban development in Ireland, showcasing how a plan-led, integrated approach can create sustainable communities. By carefully phasing and sequencing physical and social infrastructure alongside sustainable transport services, it has ensured the timely delivery of essential amenities. The approach in Cherrywood in effect leverages from historical learnings from new town or new developments in the past.

This Housing Insights Paper will discuss some of the progressive steps taken by DLRCC and its collaboration with key stakeholders within the landbank to ensure that sufficient infrastructure has been, or will be, provided, to support Cherrywood's sustainable growth.

What was the solution?

Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council took several actions to ensure the effective front loading of infrastructure and the implementation of the Cherrywood Planning Scheme. However, four actions stand out as being key to the effective and timely delivery of infrastructure to support the creation of sustainable communities, detailed in Figure 1. The following section will look at these four areas in more detail.

Figure 1: Key actions taken by Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council



1. Established a Dedicated Multi-Disciplinary Team

In 2015, DLRCC established a Development Agency Project Team, following the approval of the Planning Scheme by An Bord Pleanála and the designation of Cherrywood as a Strategic Development Zone (SDZ). The team was set up in recognition of the scale and complexity of the SDZ landbank, to deal with and overcome challenges such as the unique topography and landscape of the plan area, its rich heritage and biodiversity, protected views and structures and habitats with significant environmental considerations. The Development Agency Project Team is a multi-disciplinary team forming part of the Forward Planning Infrastructure Department, led by the Director of Forward Planning Infrastructure. The team was established to oversee the implementation and successful activation of the scheme. This team was initially led by a designated Programme Manager who had three staff, including a Senior Executive Engineer for physical infrastructure, a Senior Executive Planner for planning, and a Landscape Project Architect for green infrastructure.

The team has expanded over the past decade to become a holistic hub for the Cherrywood development to support its progression with expertise in administration, planning, policy, physical engineering, green infrastructure and financial management. This represents a new approach to the oversight of an SDZ and showcases the effectiveness of a “one-stop shop” model. This was important, noting, that as well as there being thirteen different landowners involved in the project, the area was a complex, greenfield site. The Planning Scheme lands are challenging, with most of the plan area undeveloped and rural with a varied landscape and topography, flanked by three valleys. Furthermore, the area is rich in heritage and biodiversity, with protected views, structures and habitats with considerable environmental sensitivities.

The multi-disciplinary nature of the team, and collated shared expertise, meant that the team was able to progress the infrastructure projects of LIHAF⁶ (Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund) and URDF⁷ (Urban Regeneration & Development Fund) for the Cherrywood SDZ in a more efficient manner, freeing development land and removing infrastructure blockages. Having one project team as a point of contact supported the early activation of the SDZ landbank and its ongoing progression and implementation of the Planning Scheme.

2. Phasing and Sequencing of Infrastructure Provision

Amongst Cherrywood’s guiding principles for infrastructure provision, is a holistic approach to sustainable living. Phasing and sequencing of infrastructure provision in tandem with residential development was built into the Planning Scheme, and this was key to its success.⁸ Phasing and sequencing requirements are set out in the Planning Scheme, providing clarity for landowners, applicants, developers and future residents or employers.

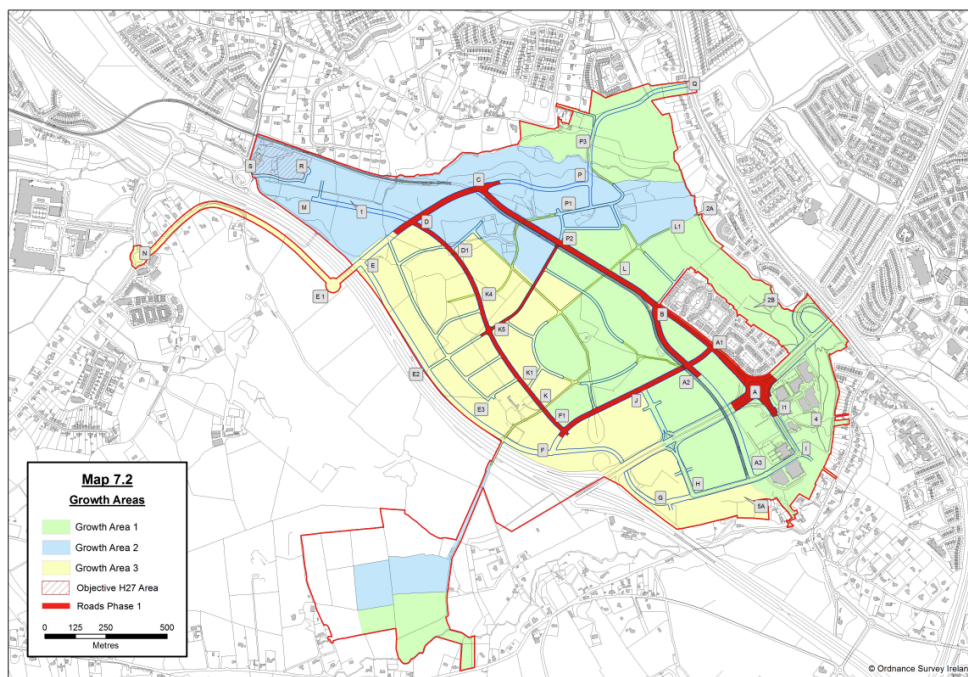
Phasing and sequencing ensure that essential services are provided in a timely manner to support the newly emerging residential neighbourhoods and communities, whilst also promoting sustainable compact growth. For the purposes of phasing and sequencing, the eight development areas were grouped into three growth areas, as set out in Figure 2.

6 The Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund is a key element of Pillar 3 of Rebuilding Ireland. It provides funding for off-site enabling infrastructure.

7 The Urban Regeneration & Development Fund is a Project Ireland 2040 initiative to support compact and sustainable development in built-up areas.

8 Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. (2023). *Cherrywood Planning Scheme 2014 (updated)*.

Figure 2: Cherrywood Planning Scheme Map



Source: Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. (2023). *Cherrywood Planning Scheme*, p. 91

There is a focus on the sequential delivery of schools, open space, green infrastructure and sustainable transport infrastructure, detailed in Appendix I. In terms of the sequential delivery of schools, the Planning Scheme required a scaled minimum level of school provision to be in place before a certain threshold of residential units would be permitted. This was non-negotiable, and the process was designed so that schools would be located near parks and sports playing fields. For example, prior to the granting of planning permission for 1,000 residential units, the site and open space for a primary school (24 or 32 classrooms) had to be made available to the Department of Education by the relevant landowner. Subsequently, for planning permission to be granted for an increased number of residential units (1,800), a primary school (24 or 31 classrooms) would ideally be built and complete, or otherwise be subject to an agreed deviation between the local authority and the Department of Education.⁹ This process ensures a holistic approach to the creation of sustainable living and working communities with an emphasis on the provision of necessary social infrastructure in tandem with the delivery of residential units.

DLRCC engaged with the Department of Education on the phasing of the development and have continued to engage with them on any amendments to the scheme. To date, a number of school sites have been made available by landowners to the Department of Education. The local authority secured the sites through the statutory planning process, but it had no control over when they were built. Because of this, the Planning Scheme allows for a deviation when flexibility is needed.

There was a similar process for the provision of open space, and this can be seen in the amended Cherrywood Planning Scheme,¹⁰ where DLRCC determined that significant upfront social infrastructure

9 Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. (2023). *Cherrywood Planning Scheme 2014 (updated)*, pp. 90.

10 Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. (2018). *Cherrywood Planning Scheme 2014*, pp. 2.

had been provided with the completion of Tully Park, Ticknick Park and Beckett Park to allow for residential development to commence in Growth Area 1 and Growth Areas 2 or 3. Road infrastructure was also key to unlocking homes in Growth Area 2 and 3. Development up to a maximum of 2,300 residential units in total in either of these areas is permissible, linked to the provision of road infrastructure.

In addition, the Planning Scheme places an emphasis on promoting and facilitating the delivery of the Town Centre and three Village Centres, as the mixed-use component of each of the three Growth Areas across the SDZ. The phasing and sequencing requirements of the Planning Scheme have ensured that permission is in place for the mixed-use Town Centre and one of the Village Centres (Tully Village). This approach is to support the emerging communities with a range of facilities in close proximity and to underpin the vision of a sustainable place for Cherrywood.

In July 2018, the Cherrywood Planning Scheme was amended to expedite housing delivery, recognising the extensive infrastructure of roads and public parks already in place, which facilitated the opening up of land for development.¹¹ The amended sequencing and phasing process meant that landowners could seek to bring forward applications for additional homes earlier than originally envisaged, providing the necessary infrastructure was in place.

3. Collaboration and Early Engagement with Multiple Stakeholders

The project involves multiple landowners and stakeholders. These include, among others, the National Transport Authority, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, National Parks and Wildlife, National Monuments, Uisce Eireann, the Health Service Executive and the Department of Education. There are regular scheduled guidance workshops between the Development Agency Project Team and active landowners and developers. Guidance and support by way of feedback is provided by the Development Agency Project Team on the overall planning scheme, to provide a better understanding of the scheme requirements to further inform applicant development proposals. There are also additional sub-meetings to discuss queries on certain topics, for example, relating to relating to green infrastructure or surface water. The scheduled workshops are facilitated in advance of the statutory Section 247 pre-planning consultation meetings to guide on concept designs prior to lodging an application and then post-granting of planning permission to guide on working through attaining compliance in relation to conditions in a grant of permission.

As well as collaboration with multiple stakeholders, and in its remit as Development Agency for Cherrywood, early engagement by DLRCC was important during the initial stages of the project. Landowner forums were held to discuss any key issues, to allow for a healthy dialogue on the Planning Scheme requirements and to identify the opportunities to build further on. DLRCC led the forums, and they were held as in-person meetings, which was beneficial.

In addition, DLRCC, as Development Agency, meets regularly with the transport authorities; Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and the National Transport Authority (NTA) to ensure

¹¹ Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. (2018). *Amendment No. 5: Cherrywood Planning Scheme (July 2018)*.

satisfactory provision of sustainable transport infrastructure. This multi-agency collaborative approach to the provision of public transport infrastructure in Cherrywood is an example of good practice collaboration between different agencies and it allowed for the futureproofing of public transport provision, in line with projected increases in residential occupancy.

4. Utilised Various Funding Streams

When the Planning Scheme was being written, the concept of funding was set out. Chapter seven of the Planning Scheme sets out the responsibility for the funding and provision of the strategic infrastructure and services. With regard to the suite of infrastructure and services required for the full development of the Planning Scheme, the scheme acknowledged that such 'infrastructural facilities and services that benefit the development of the Planning Scheme, can be funded by way of a supplementary levy scheme under Section 49 and/or an additional Section 48 levy scheme and/or a supplementary Section 48(2)(c) levy scheme as facilitated by the Planning & Development Acts 2000-2010 as amended. Alternative means of funding infrastructure can also be examined by DLRCC and the landowners/developers'.¹²

The ability to access various Government funding streams was key. DLRCC has utilised various funding streams for the provision of infrastructure throughout Cherrywood. The County Development Plan 2022-2028 Two-Year Monitoring Report¹³ by DLRCC provides an overview of the different funding mechanisms used by the local authority. DLRCC led the applications for Urban Regeneration Development Fund and Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund funding but were also supported by the landowners and state agencies with letters of support, to include commitment from landowners to provide the land for the various projects.

Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF)

In 2020, DLRCC was successful in obtaining funding under the first call of URDF¹⁴ for the Cherrywood Parks, Greenways and Attenuation Project, at an estimated cost of €17.8m. The project will provide for a linear park, surface water attenuation ponds and phase two of Tully Park. Under the second call for URDF funding, DLRCC was successful in obtaining funding of €40.3m for several projects in Cherrywood:

- Castle Street Link
- Ticknick Park Ballycorus Access
- Town Centre Pedestrian and Cycle Link
- Three Public Parks – Lehaunstown Park, Priorsland Park and Parade Green
- Smart Parking Study
- Beckett Link

12 Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. (2018). *Cherrywood Planning Scheme (updated)*, p. 84

13 Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. (2024). *County Development Plan 2022-2028 – Two-Year Monitoring Report*.

14 URDF was established to support more compact and sustainable development, through the regeneration and rejuvenation of Ireland's five cities and other large towns.

Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF)

In March 2017, DLRCC was successful in its Cherrywood LIHAF application.¹⁵ LIHAF funding of €15.19m was allocated for the provision of infrastructure in Cherrywood, including the Druid's Glen Road, Druid's Glen Bridge, a new junction on the N11 and the Druid's Glen Road feature bridge. At the time of writing, Phase 1 and 2 of the works have been completed, providing for a new junction on the N11, part of the Druid's Glen Road, and a bridge spanning the Cabinteely Stream.

Ireland's Strategic Investment Fund (ISIF)

DLRCC understands that ISIF was availed of by one of the key developers. DLRCC, in its role as Development Agency, provided the rationale to ISIF to support the developer's application for funding. The developer utilised funding between 2017 and 2019 to progress enabling infrastructure works on the Cherrywood site.

Landowner Delivered Infrastructure: Reduction mechanism for certain development contributions

A Section 48 Development Contribution Scheme in respect of development in the Cherrywood Planning Scheme area 2023 to 2028 was approved in accordance with Section 48 of the Planning & Development Act 2000, as amended, on 9th October 2023.¹⁶

This Scheme provides for the payment of development contributions in respect of DLRCC Countywide infrastructural projects (contained in Appendix II of Scheme) and **additional contributions** in respect of the permissions granted in the Cherrywood Planning Scheme area to fund Cherrywood specific projects (contained in Appendix III of Scheme). This Scheme superseded the previous scheme, known as the '2017 Scheme'. Key provisions in the Scheme include that it is:

- Envisaged that Cherrywood specific infrastructure projects will be delivered by landowners;
- That under Exemptions and Reductions, a reduction in Cherrywood specific contributions is permitted in certain circumstances in the delivery of Cherrywood projects; and
- Provides DLRCC with its match funding requirement for government programmes (LIHAF, URDF), limited land costs for such government funded programme, and cost of ancillary services undertaken by DLRCC.

The reduction mechanism allows developers to deliver certain infrastructure in Cherrywood while reducing their specific Cherrywood development contribution payable, ensuring efficient infrastructure provision to support and unlock the development of the SDZ.

¹⁵ LIHAF is used to provide public off-site infrastructure to relieve critical infrastructure blockages, which have been identified as impediments to the development of key sites for housing.

¹⁶ Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. (2023). *Development Contribution Scheme in respect of development in the Cherrywood Planning Scheme Area 2023-2028, Section 48 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended)*.

Public infrastructure is classified under the following three headings:



Additional reductions apply in cases such as:

- The demolition and replacement of existing residential development with new residential or commercial development.

What were the outcomes?

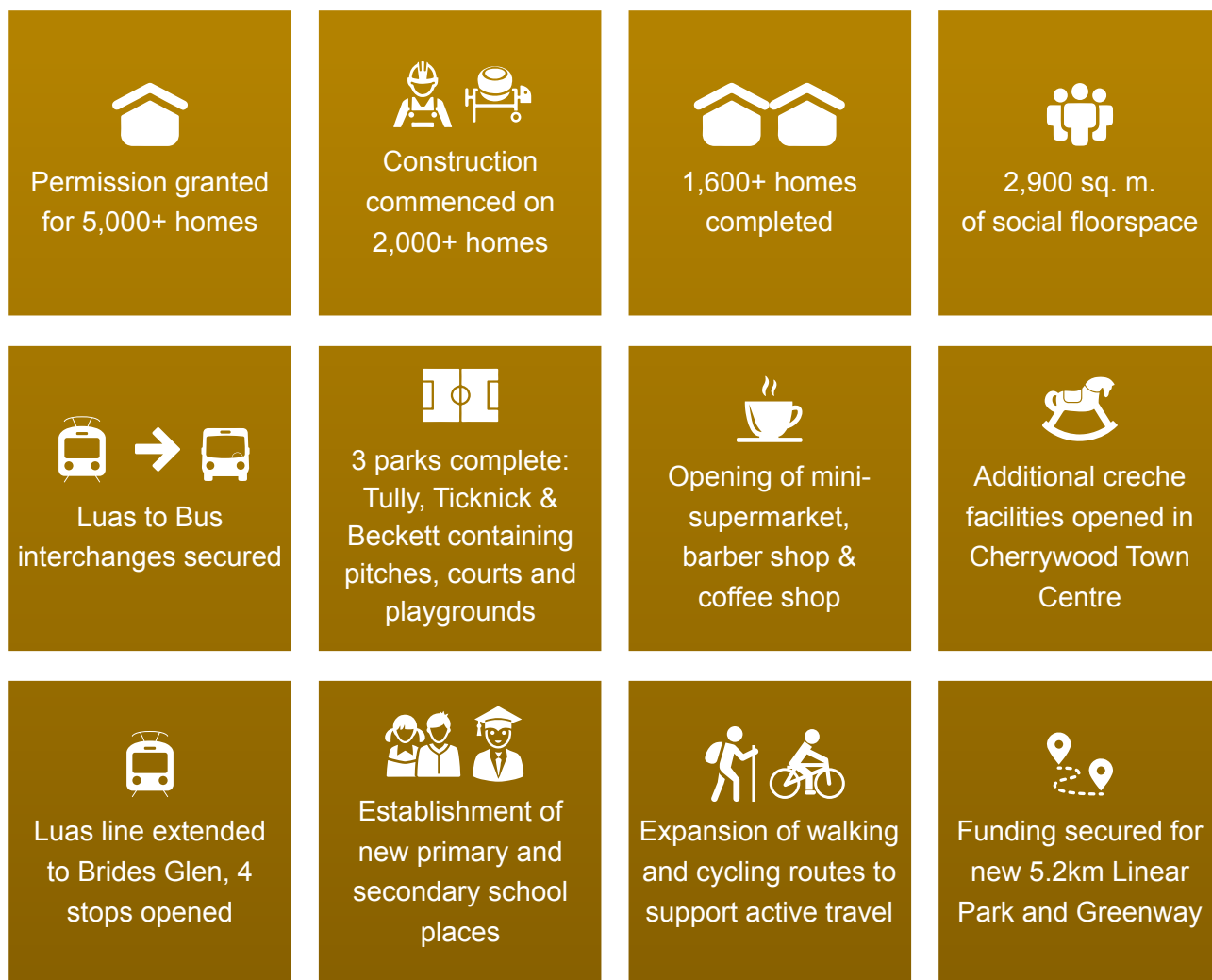
To date, planning permission has been granted for 5,075 homes in Cherrywood, with 1,690 completed and 2,000 homes under construction. As part of Cherrywood's sequencing of social floorspace,¹⁷ 2,900 square metres has been provisionally delivered through planning consent, with 1,300 square metres permitted between 2022 and 2024.¹⁸

Various community infrastructure has been provided, including significant parks and green infrastructure such as Ticknick, Tully and Beckett Parks, additional creche facilities, expanded school facilities, and transport infrastructure, illustrated in Figure 3.

¹⁷ 'Social floorspace' in this context refers to uses such as a library, primary health care centre, community rooms, creche facilities. Other typically 'commercial uses' that also provide important facilities for the community include the use of retail units, restaurants and hotels.

¹⁸ Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. (2024). *County Development Plan 2022-2028 - Two-Year Monitoring Report*.

Figure 3: The provision of infrastructure and other outcomes



Source: Compiled by The Housing Agency using information from Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. (2024). County Development Plan 2022-2028 – Two-Year Monitoring Report.



Tully Park Tea Rooms and Play Area



Beckett Park (bottom) and Tully Park (top)



Ticknick Park and Pitches



Housing under construction in Cherrywood (March 2024)

Success of the 10-minute neighbourhood

Cherrywood SDZ was designed as a “10-minute neighbourhood”, which aims to ensure that people can walk, cycle or use public transport to access their day-to-day needs and services such as schools, shops, parks and employment. The current Planning Scheme for Cherrywood sets out sustainable travel targets, as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Sustainable Travel Targets, Cherrywood Planning Scheme

Mode	Mode share
Walking	30% of internal trips
Cycling	45% of internal trips
Luas	25% of external trips
Bus	12% of external trips & 5% of internal trips
Car driver	45% of external trips & 15% of internal trips

Source: Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. (2023). Cherrywood Planning Scheme (updated), p. 37

Emerging data from DLRCC shows that the sustainable travel targets detailed in Table 1 have been exceeded, therefore higher and more ambitious sustainable travel targets have been set within the Proposed Amendment No. 11: Cherrywood Town Centre and Environs Review.¹⁹ The design of sustainable neighbourhood infrastructure within a 10-minute boundary has resulted in a significant uptake of walking and cycling by residents and there has also been a decrease in car usage in the area.

Challenges

DLRCC has noted the various challenges in achieving the vision for Cherrywood, as set out in the Cherrywood Planning Scheme, and some of the obstacles faced when provisioning for infrastructure within the wider development.

Changing landscape for retail and office development

In the post-COVID landscape, demand for retail and office development has evolved, due to changes in hybrid working and online shopping trends. This was an opportunity for DLRCC to

19 Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. (2024). Proposed Amendment No. 11 Cherrywood Town Centre and Environs Review.

reimagine the Town Centre in Cherrywood. The local authority undertook a review of the Town Centre and Environs Area, with a view to ensuring the timely delivery of a vibrant and attractive Town Centre.²⁰ The review sought to ensure an appropriate mix and phasing of uses to secure a balance of employment, community and social uses.²¹ This review resulted in the submission of Proposed Amendment No. 11: Cherrywood Town Centre & Environs by DLRCC to An Bord Pleanála under Section 170A of the Planning & Development Act 2000, as amended on 20th December 2024.

Cost of apartments

There are affordability challenges associated with building homes, particularly for apartment construction. Building apartments is costly and poses affordability issues for both the public and private sector. A report by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage published in September 2024 estimated that the average total development cost of building a two-bed apartment in the Greater Dublin Area ranged from €549,790 in the suburbs to €591,783 in urban areas.²² The total development costs include both the hard and soft costs of developing an apartment.²³ In contrast, the total development cost of a three bed semi-detached house was listed as €450,652. Building houses may be more cost effective; however, it would lead to lower residential densities as individual houses require more square footage and significantly more land, whereas apartment blocks achieve greater density, lending to compact development in line with government policy.

Car parking requirements

Residential car parking standards are set out in local authority county development plans and ministerial guidelines such as the “Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments”²⁴ and the “Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements – Guidelines for Planning Authorities”.²⁵ The requirement to include car parking spaces raises issues for local authorities. To protect the public realm, underground or undercroft car parking is preferable. However, this method is more costly for development. DLRCC has secured reduced car parking ratios for residential car parking in Cherrywood, which will help to improve affordability for all homes, including apartments.²⁶ In addition, DLRCC has also submitted a Proposed Amendment No. 10 to An Bord Pleanála dated 29th November 2024, in relation to Non-Residential Car Parking, which will also seek to reduce the car parking requirements for all other land-use types across the SDZ.²⁷

20 Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. (2023). *Proposed Cherrywood Town Centre and Environs Review: Have Your Say Non-Statutory Public Consultation*.

21 Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. (2024). *Proposed Amendment No. 11 Cherrywood Town Centre and Environs Review*.

22 Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. (2024). *Total Development Cost Study*.

23 ‘Hard costs’ refer to the construction cost of a development. ‘Soft costs’ are made up of a range of indirect costs which are incurred in the process of development, including statutory fees, professional fees, finance, etc.

24 Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. (2020). *Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments*.

25 Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. (2024). *Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements – Guidelines for Planning Authorities*.

26 Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. (2020). *Proposed Amendment to Cherrywood Planning Scheme: Car Parking Standards*.

27 Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. (2024) *Proposed Amendment No. 10: Non-Residential Car Parking*

Lessons learned

Lessons for the successful provision of infrastructure in large-scale developments include:

1. The Planning Scheme served as the foundation for success and the potential for an implementation plan

The Planning Scheme sets out the locations for various developments along with what type of development is to be provided. While this is important, DLRCC have said that it may have been beneficial to have an implementation plan for the Planning Scheme, to provide more certainty in relation to funding. The designation of Cherrywood as a Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) was also an advantage because once approved, and once development proposals are consistent with the provisions of the relevant planning scheme, no party may appeal to An Bord Pleanála. Therefore, there is a level of certainty to the planning permission granted and the ability to fast-track delivery.

2. Phasing of key infrastructure in line with development can enable effective infrastructure provision

The Planning Scheme served as a blueprint for the development, but the phasing and sequencing of infrastructure was critical. By providing essential infrastructure in tandem with the delivery of residential units, DLRCC took a holistic approach to sustainable development. Harmonious phasing and sequencing can prevent any infrastructure deficits across the development and ensure that essential services are available upon the occupation of new residential units, the establishment of new employment opportunities and the support of emerging communities.

3. Distinction between physical and social infrastructure

Physical infrastructure was key to unlock land for development, including water and drainage facilities, transport infrastructure, utilities, energy and waste management.²⁸ Social infrastructure can then be provided in tandem with physical infrastructure and includes amenities such as parks, schools, and other shared amenities. Both types of infrastructure are key to realising the concept of a “10-minute neighbourhood”.

4. Collaboration and early engagement are essential

Collaboration between the different working parties was critical, both externally with stakeholders and internally in DLRCC. DLRCC collaborated with the active landowners, developers, various transport authorities and state agencies. The successful provision of infrastructure would not have been possible without the input, alignment on goals and support of the various organisations involved.

28 Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. (2023). *Cherrywood Planning Scheme*, pp. 34.

5. The Development Agency Project Team was critical

The Development Agency Project Team was key for projects of such scale, and involving as much stakeholder engagement. It was beneficial to have expertise and knowledge in one team from the outset to break down the issues and to work through solutions. Having one project team as a point of contact supported the early activation of the SDZ landbank and its ongoing progression and implementation of the Planning Scheme. The role of the Development Agency Project Team was key in ensuring high levels of consistency with the Planning Scheme.

6. Potential of the “10-minute neighbourhood”

The COVID-19 pandemic encouraged people to be more invested in their local area and to appreciate their open space. It showed that a “10-minute neighbourhood” can be achieved by following guiding principles and clear plans.

Future outlook

Since the original Planning Scheme in 2014, the Cherrywood SDZ has continued to evolve, with DLRCC proactively securing nine Planning Scheme amendments to date, and two further proposed amendments currently subject to determination.

When complete, the Cherrywood SDZ area will deliver approximately 10,500 new homes, accommodating a population of around 26,000 people. Additionally, the Proposed Amendment No. 11: Cherrywood Town Centre and Environs Review could introduce up to 2,000 additional residential units within the Town Centre.²⁹ It will also support approximately 22,000 new jobs through commercial development within the area and provide for a five-fold increase in employment opportunities.³⁰

Cherrywood will include a new mixed-use Town Centre and three smaller Village Centres. According to DLRCC, it is key that a vibrant, mixed-use Town Centre is at the very heart of Cherrywood to serve the emerging and future residential population, as well as employees. The Town Centre and wider SDZ lands will be served by public transport and active travel modes including five Luas stops, four of which are already operational, an enhanced bus service and pedestrian and cycle friendly greenways. The Town Centre will be key to the success of Cherrywood as a liveable place for communities and as an attractive, strategic employment location, with strong place-making and excellent quality of life. When complete, the scheme will be a high density, mixed-use, compact, light-rail-based settlement, offering residents attractive lifestyle opportunities with easy access to the coast, Dublin Mountains, Dún Laoghaire town and beyond to Dublin City.

29 Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. (2024). *Proposed Amendment No. 11: Cherrywood Town Centre and Environs Review*

30 Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. (2023). *Proposed Cherrywood Town Centre and Environs Review Have Your Say Non-Statutory Public Consultation*, pp. 4.

Cherrywood SDZ illustrates the benefits of a dedicated multi-disciplinary team, plan-led development management, phasing and sequencing of infrastructure in advance of development, utilising various funding streams, and the continued review of the Planning Scheme to respond and address evolving policy and development opportunities.

The concept of sustainable communities will continue to be an important policy consideration for future housing developments in Ireland.

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Appendix I

Sequencing relating to the provision of schools³¹

Schools	Site and associated open space to be made available to the Dept of Education and Skills prior to the granting of permission for: *	School buildings complete prior to the granting of permission for: *
Primary School (including adjoining open space provision for school) (24 or 32 classroom school)	1,000 residential units	1,800 residential units
Post Primary School (including adjoining open space provision for school)	2,500 residential units	3,400 residential units
Primary School (number of classrooms depending on demand including adjoining open space provision for school)	4,000 residential units	5,000 residential units
Post Primary School (including adjoining open space provision for school)	5,000 residential units	6,000 residential units
Primary School (number of classrooms depending on demand including adjoining open space provision for school)	7,000 residential units	8,000 residential units
Primary School (number of classrooms depending on demand including adjoining open space provision for school)	8,000 residential units	

31 Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. (2023). *Cherrywood Planning Scheme 2014 (updated)*, pp. 90.

Sequencing relating to open space/green infrastructure³²

Open Space for Growth Area 1	Requirement	Taken in Charge by the Council
Tully Park Permission Granted on 13th July 2016 (DZ15A/0813). Work commenced in February 2017	Construction to taking in charge standard prior to occupation of any dwellings within Development Areas 2 & 4 and to be made available to the public at a time to be agreed with the Local Authority	To be agreed with the Local Authority at application stage
Ticknick Park (circa 6 Ha) Permission Granted on 3rd November 2016 (DZ16A/0570). Work commenced in February 2017	Construction to taking in charge standard prior to occupation of any dwellings within Development Areas 2 & 4 and to be made available to the public at a time to be agreed with the Local Authority	To be agreed with the Local Authority at application stage.
Green Infrastructure	To be included in Planning Applications for development in the Development Area in which they are located and to be made publicly accessible at a time to be agreed with the Local Authority	To be agreed with the Local Authority at application stage.

³² Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council. (2023). *Cherrywood Planning Scheme 2014 (updated)*, pp. 90.



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