

## **2 PRINCIPLES OF THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This section sets out the background and context for the plan objectives and also outlines the main principles behind the Development Plan policies.

Plan policy objectives have been derived from undertaking the plan making process and the setting out of a vision for Dundalk. The strategic objectives seek to set out the broader context for the future development objectives for Dundalk. Underpinning these strategic objectives are the key principles of achieving sustainable development and social inclusion.

### **2.2 Sustainable Development**

#### **2.2.1 Overview**

In 1984 the World Commission on Environment and Development began preparing a 'global program of change'. This was submitted to the United Nations General Assembly in 1987 and was formally called the Bruntland Report. The report aimed to analyse the linkages and interconnectedness of a number of global issues, these included population, depletion of species, energy, industry and human settlement.

The Commission's answer was the concept of 'sustainable development'; this can be described as:

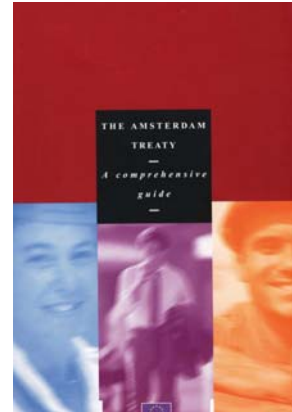
*'Development that sustains human progress not just in a few places for a few years, but for the entire planet into the distant future. To counteract the increase in poverty observed in most parts of the world....a new era of economic growth is indispensable. But it must be built on preserving old resources and utilising new resources existing in our environment. This requires a process of constant change whose goal it must be to harmonise the exploitation of resources, investment flow, the orientation of technological development and institutional changes with present and future needs.'*  
(World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future, 1987)

#### **2.2.2 International Context**

The concept was further enforced at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio, 1992. Agenda 21 was established as the UN's action plan for sustainable development. It targets all sectors of society from governments and international organisations as well as industry and community; it provides the means with which to take action to promote sustainable development both locally and globally.

### 2.2.3 European Context

The Treaty of Amsterdam (1997) introduced the principle of sustainable development into European law. The principle is now enshrined in the preamble and in the objectives of the EU Treaty; it is also featured in Article 2 of the EC Treaty, which lays down the tasks of the Community. Achieving sustainable development is an objective of the European Union and as such Members have to incorporate it into policy.



### 2.2.4 National Context

The Irish government is obliged to promote and implement sustainable development as part of the Rio Declaration. Ireland is committed under the Amsterdam Treaty to sustainable development, and must enforce the objectives of the Treaty. In response to these commitments Ireland has drawn up a national strategy, which endorses and promotes Agenda 21, 'Sustainable Development: A Strategy for Ireland' (1997).

### 2.2.5 Local Context

The Council has adopted the principles of sustainable development and will promote and encourage the integration of economic, environmental, social and cultural issues into local policies and programmes.

### 2.2.6 Creating A Sustainable Community

Dundalk and environs is a dynamic and individual area located in a unique environment. In order to sustain its current level of growth and development, inherent problems associated with resource consumption, employment and social needs must be addressed. It must embrace the challenge of sustainable development and move towards becoming a sustainable and responsible community.

### 2.2.7 Sustainable Development Aims

In order to achieve the aims of sustainable development, the Council will seek to:

*'Improve the social, economic and environmental quality of human settlements and the living and working environments of all people'. (Agenda 21) and 'avoid unbalanced, unhealthy and unsustainable growth of human settlements.... promote land-use patterns that minimise transport demands, save energy and protect open and green spaces.'* (Habitat II).

*Encourage sustainable transport and mobility concepts*

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- Where possible, reduce and avoid traffic in the town through higher densities, a mix of functions, short distances between developments and self-sufficient localised neighbourhoods.
- Promote the creation of interconnected, legible and interdependent urban forms.
- Prioritise ecologically sound mobility namely pedestrianisation, cycling, public transport and car sharing.
- Reclaim public spaces for social and recreational uses.

### *Strengthen economic development*

- Concentrate on the strengths of regional economic structures to reduce the instability of the local economy and encourage the growth and development of indigenous industries.
- Strengthen local economic development and promote greater linkages with regional partners.

### *Promote environmental awareness and responsibility*

- Promote environmental responsibility in relation to economic activity and environmental impacts.
- Promote the use of healthy and environmentally sound building materials and concepts.
- Promote environmental awareness in schools, businesses and homes.
- Promote environmental awareness amongst Council staff and members.

### *Minimise resource consumption*

- Encourage renewable energy production for local energy consumption.
- Increase awareness of energy efficiency in the home.
- Minimise energy consumption of buildings by encouraging passive houses and increased insulation in new and old buildings.
- Support the refurbishment and reuse of old buildings.

### *Support social equality and integration*

- Encourage increased accessibility to social, cultural, educational and health facilities.
- Promote a greater mix between living and working space to increase communication.
- Support industries and organisations, which promote social inclusion and integration.

### *Promote an integrated planning culture*

- Encourage the integration of all relevant sectors of the administration, local politicians, external experts, citizen representatives and groups at all stages of the development process.
- Ensure planning procedures are carried out in a transparent and integrated fashion.
- Public participation will be proactively sought to ensure that participation has a direct impact on implementation.

## 2.2.8 Dundalk and Environs

Dundalk has great potential to become a sustainable community and regional development centre for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Achieving City Status along with Gateway status will further Dundalk's potential for developing as a regional development centre. The Council realises the challenge ahead and will seek to promote and encourage the proper planning and sustainable development of the plan area over the plan period.

## 2.3 **Social Inclusion**

### 2.3.1 Introduction and Context

Social inclusion is about people, and about everyone feeling part of their local community and playing an active role in its improvement. It has a simple purpose to help us shape our own futures and to improve our quality of life. Social exclusion is damaging and sets people apart; it undermines society, families and individuals alike.



*Social sustainability aims to create an equitable society for all. It seeks to address the problems of poverty, marginalisation and racism. The aim of social sustainability is to create a society, which is safe, clean and prosperous for present and future generations.*

The plan seeks to tackle social exclusion and is opposed to any form of discrimination or denial of opportunity due to gender, age, creed, race, sexual orientation, ability, socio-economic background or national origin.

The National Development Plan (2000) aims to bring about a more equal society by:

- Promoting social inclusion, with particular reference to the reintegration of the socially excluded into the labour force and equal opportunities;
- Maintaining the effort to reintegrate those who are currently long-term unemployed into the labour force;
- Supporting an increase in female labour force participation;
- Meeting the particular and diverse needs of specific groups in society, including those experiencing disadvantage and those with special educational needs; and
- Providing opportunities so that every individual can attain an adequate level of literacy and numeracy skills.



National government is leading the way in terms of social inclusion; a number of key National and County strategies are as follows:

*National Anti-Poverty Strategy (1997)* – provides a framework for action to help achieve the objective of eliminating poverty in Ireland. The principles underlying the strategy are as follows:

Ensuring equal access and encouraging participation for all;  
Guaranteeing the rights of minorities, especially through anti-discrimination measures;

- The reduction of inequalities and in particular, addressing the gender dimensions of poverty;
- The development of the partnership approach building on national and local partnership processes;
- Actively involving the community and voluntary sector;
- Encouraging self-reliance through respecting individual dignity and promoting empowerment; and
- Engaging in appropriate consultative processes, especially with users of services.

*Traveller Accommodation Programme 2000-2004 (DUDC)* – this programme was prepared under the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998. The programme seeks to ensure that:

- all Traveller families secure accommodation of a type, standard and location which is acceptable to them;
- there is full and meaningful consultation with individuals, Traveller representative groups, statutory and voluntary agencies and the local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee; and
- an adequate range of ‘back-up’ services and facilities are provided.

### 2.3.2 Objectives

The Council seeks to address the problem of social exclusion through the introduction of socially inclusive objectives. These are:

- to promote an active citizenship whereby all members of the community become involved in decision making and resolving problems;
- to support the development of community infrastructure such as transport and childcare facilities and to ensure the participation of all in employment and community activities;
- to build on what is already happening and make use of existing networks;
- to ensure that access for the disabled is provided within all new developments and ensure that continued improvements are made within the Plan area;
- to ensure that ethnic minorities have equal access to education, health care, employment and the decision making process;
- to support women in the work place and those seeking employment through the provision of adequate childcare facilities;
- to ensure that the long-term unemployed have an opportunity to retrain or further their education;
- to support educational agencies both locally and nationally in reducing illiteracy rates;

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- to maintain an appropriate level of inclusiveness within the planning process which will ensure that all members of society can gain access to information relating to policies and programmes.
- to make a real commitment to community consultation.

The Council aims to implement these objectives, and to seek, where possible, to fully integrate those suffering from economic, social or ethnic marginalisation into society and the decision making process.

It is recognised that several areas within the plan area require further study to assess the prevailing level of social exclusion.