

3.2 Community and Social Infrastructure

3.2.1 Introduction

Successful development within the Woodbrook-Shanganagh Local Area Plan will not only rely upon creating an attractive physical environment, but also upon creating a sustainable and vibrant neighbourhood within which to live. Section 19(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) states that a Local Area Plan must be consistent with the objectives of a Development Plan and must include objectives in relation to community facilities.

The Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2009), states: *"Sustainable neighbourhoods require a range of community facilities, and each district/neighbourhood will need to be considered within its own wider locality, as some facilities may be available in the wider area while others will need to be provided locally. In this context, planning authorities should seek to ensure that facilities for social and cultural use, such as community centres, and personal and community development, such as resource centres, are available within the wider community."*

The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Governments 'Local Area Plans - Guidelines for Planning Authorities', 2013, promotes the provision of sustainable communities and places a focus on the needs of local communities through - for example - reinforcing existing facilities, promoting mixed use development, providing compact walkable neighbourhoods and by providing conveniently-located neighbourhood facilities.

The County Development Plan 2016-2022 contains a suite of policies in relation to Social Infrastructure and Community Development throughout Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown. One of the key objectives of the Development Plan's Community Strategy (Section 7) is: *"To develop and support sustainable neighbourhoods into the future through the commensurate and proper integration of housing with quality social and community infrastructure such as schools, amenities and childcare facilities..."*.

In addition to the County Development Plan, community and social infrastructure development is further supported by the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2016-2021. The following Council publications have also been taken into account in preparing this section of the plan:

The Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown:

- Age Friendly Strategy 2016-2020
- Library Development Plan 2016-2020
- Arts Development Plan 2016-2022
- Sports Participation Strategy 2013 – 2017
- Open Space Strategy 2012-2015

3.2.2 Assets & Achievements

A Community Audit was carried out as part of plan preparation process to ascertain the level and type existing community facilities, the findings of which are referred to below and presented in Map 8 & Appendix 2.

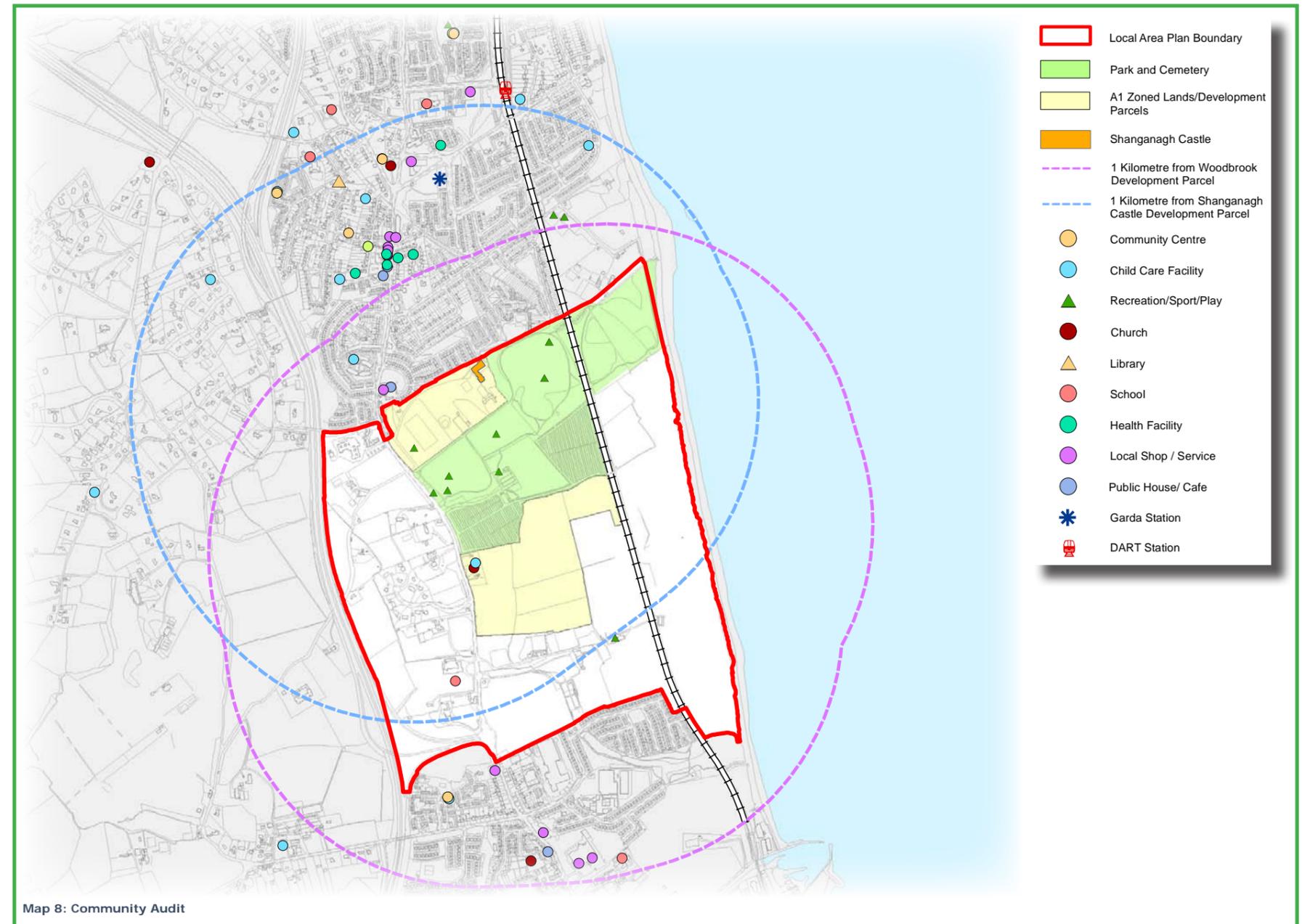
The Plan Area is exceptionally well served by recreational facilities primarily due to the proximity of Shanganagh Park and its associated sports facilities and Woodbrook Golf Club. In addition to Shanganagh Park and Castle, the Plan Area contains a Church – St James / Crinken Church of Ireland and Woodbrook College (formerly St Brendan's College) both of which would be classed as community support facilities. There is, however a lack of other supporting community facilities within the Plan area itself.

The Community Audit Map below illustrates (i) the proximity of the Plan Area to Shankill and Bray, and (ii) the existing community support facilities such as shops and services, health facilities, and schools within a wider catchment

area of 1km from each of the development parcels at Shanganagh and Woodbrook. These existing facilities within the immediate vicinity may have the capacity to be shared and augmented with additional facilities.

These facilities include two purpose built community centres – Stonebridge Community Centre and Cois Cairn Youth and Community Facility. In addition, there are community facilities at St Anne's Church Resource Centre and Shankill Old Folks Association in Shankill. Just north of the 1km radius indicated is Shanganagh Park House in Rathallagh. These existing facilities offer excellent services to the wider community, a summary of which it set out in the table below.

Furthermore, the Plan Area has good public transport links to Bray Town Centre with its range of higher order shops and services – e.g. banks, supermarkets and restaurants.



Stonebridge Community Centre: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting Rooms • Neverland Preschool Childcare • Youth Club • Pilates • Zumba • Women's Group • Art & Flower arranging 	Shankill Old Folks Association: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day Care • Arts and Crafts • Gentle Keep Fit • Visiting Entertainers, • Quizzes, Raffles and Bingo • Meals on Wheels • Tea Club • Monthly Book Sale
Cois Cairn Youth and Community Facility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting/ Training Room • Playground • Youth Room • Childcare Room • Youth Groups 	Shanganagh Park House: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting / Training Rooms • Coffee Shop • Playground • Childcare facilities • Social Groups - Recycled Teenagers, Golden Crafts, Silver Threads • Library Service • Shanganagh Youth Project

Table 5: Example of Services Provided within Existing Community Facilities

3.2.3 Challenges & Opportunities

To create a success of this area, making it an attractive place to live, and remain so through all life stages will depend upon the availability of a good range of accessible, high quality community facilities and amenities. A sustainable neighbourhood requires not only a variety of house types but also the timely provision of appropriate supporting community and social infrastructure that will provide and encourage future residents the option to remain within the area.

Future residential communities within the Plan Area will require commensurate social infrastructure that can remain viable. A particular challenge for this area will be striking the right balance between the capacity of existing facilities in the wider area and identifying an appropriate complimentary range of supporting facilities, required to achieve a sustainable and attractive neighbourhood.

The Community Audit identified limited community support facilities and a lack of heritage or dedicated civic space / amenities within the Plan and wider area. Shanganagh Castle offers an excellent opportunity to create both indoor and outdoor community space which could include a heritage function.

In Woodbrook, the existing Church and established mature tree belts could provide an attractive backdrop to any new outdoor civic spaces. These spaces in turn would be ideal the provision of new facilities such as schools, childcare, local shops and cafes and provide opportunities for co-locating community facilities.

3.2.4 The Way Forward

The Plan Area will focus on providing a good quality of life for its future residents in both the physical and social environment. The approach will be to optimise the use, and sharing, of existing social infrastructure and amenities together with the provision of new complimentary facilities, as appropriate. This will ensure that there is adequate amenities serving the whole area and avoid duplication or oversupply of certain facilities.

The design and layout of each of the respective development parcels in tandem with the Master Plan for Shanganagh Park, will play a vital role in providing opportunities for both community facilities and civic spaces that are well connected and integrated into the physical landscape and accessible by all users.

Key community and social infrastructure to serve the LAP area include education facilities, childcare facilities, community and social facilities, recreation and sport facilities, local shops / services and passive open / civic spaces.

i. Community Facilities

Shanganagh Castle offers an excellent opportunity to provide publically accessible facilities that would not only serve the future population of the Plan Area, but also the wider area and indeed become an attractive facility to visit from further afield. The Castle has the potential to become a key focal point within Shanganagh Park and to provide for community functions subject to feasibility studies.

The potential of the Castle to become a Community and Cultural Hub would, in effect, allow Woodbrook to develop a complimentary range of supporting facilities with a focus on providing more commercially based functions within a neighbourhood centre. Shanganagh Castle as a community and cultural hub could support and develop the local community, encourage social enterprise, support community health & wellbeing and promote culture and heritage.



Photo 4: Stonebridge Community Centre, Shankill

ii. Neighbourhood Centre Facilities

The more considered residential densities as set out in the previous section, will impact on the demographics of the Plan Area as previously envisaged. Given the accessibility of the Plan Area to Shankill and Bray, which offer higher order retail and supermarket facilities, it is considered that a large-scale commercial/retail development is no longer necessary or required. Instead, an appropriately scaled Neighbourhood Centre at Woodbrook, providing localised facilities such as a local shop, café and/or bar is, consequently, considered sufficient.

A successful Neighbourhood Centre should be capable of remaining viable relative to the associated residential development. It should be well connected and located within easy walking and/or cycle distance from the emerging residential development and provide outdoor space and a variety of uses that extend simply beyond daytime opening hours to help encourage an active and vibrant streetscape.



Photo 5: Shankill Library

Shankill Village and the old shopping Centre in Shankill is zoned 'NC' – "To protect, provide for and/or improve mixed-use neighbourhood centre facilities" in the County Development Plan. This neighbourhood centre area contains a number of convenience retail shops of c.200-300m² and there is spatial provision for a supermarket circa 1,360m². The future neighbourhood centre within Woodbrook should be secondary to the retail offering available within Shankill and Bray and therefore cater primarily for the small-scale convenience needs of future residents in the Plan Area. In this regard it is envisaged that the future retail provision would likely comprise of an anchor convenience store of up to circa 500m² retail floor space. In addition to this a number of small ancillary uses in the region of circa 100-200m².

For Shanganagh Castle, a local convenience shop to serve the immediate walk-in population of the residential community from this development parcel would facilitate easy access for day-to-day needs and as such is considered appropriate, subject to protecting residential amenity. The scale of any such unit shall be in accordance with County Development Plan Policy RET7, i.e. a floorspace not greater than 100 m² net.

iii. Education

Policy SIC8: Schools, in the County Development Plan 2016-2022 states that *“It is Council policy to ensure the reservation of primary and post-primary school sites in accordance with the requirements of the relevant education authorities...”*. There is an objective within the Woodbrook lands to provide for a new primary school. Consultation with The Department of Education and Skills has confirmed a need for a 24 classroom primary school within the lands identified.

In order to maximise land use efficiencies within the Woodbrook development parcel, a more urban school typology which also offers dual functionality with after-hours usage is encouraged. A more urban typology, together with locating a new school within or immediately adjoining open space and/or a new civic space, could make a significant contribution to the streetscape of the neighbourhood centre as recommended in the Departments ‘Code of Practice on the Provision of Schools and the Planning System, 2008’.



Photo 6: Woodbrook College, Shankill

There is a Specific Local Objective (SLO 105) – *“To investigate, in consultation with the Department of Education and Science, the reservation of a single site for a Post-Primary School to serve the growth nodes of Woodbrook/Old Connaught areas.”* The LAP is already served by Woodbrook College, a post-primary school which has recently doubled in size following its full redevelopment and now consisting of a new, purpose built state of the art 2-storey school. Consultation with DES also indicates that the development of a new post-primary school within the old Bray Golf Club lands, in addition to Woodbrook College, will cater for the anticipated post-primary school demand from the Plan Area.

iv. Childcare

Policy SIC11: *Childcare Facilities, in the County Development Plan states that “In general at least one childcare facility should be provided for all new residential developments subject to demographic and geographic needs.”* The Community Audit carried out within Section 3.2.2 above indicates that only 1 childcare facility presently exists within the LAP area, however this is a small facility and would not have the capacity to cater for the future residents of Woodbrook-Shanganagh given the restricted nature of its site.

Any new residential development within the LAP area would be required to carry out a full assessment of childcare requirements in order to determine the quantum and scale of childcare facilities required within each development,

in accordance with the County Development Plan and Childcare Guidelines. As a minimum at least one appropriately sized facility should be provided within a new development at Woodbrook, ideally this would be located in close proximity to schools, community facilities and/or neighbourhood centre facilities.

v. Health Care

Policy SIC10: Health Care Facilities, in the County Development Plan states that *“It is Council policy to encourage the integration of appropriate healthcare facilities within new and existing communities.”* Given that Woodbrook-Shanganagh could result in a population in excess of 5,000 persons, it is likely the new development will increase pressures on existing local health care facilities such as General Practitioners and local Health Centres.

It is noted that planning permission was obtained by the HSE for a new primary health care centre in Shankill (Reg. Ref. D11A/0514). This facility has not yet been constructed but the HSE has recently received a grant for an extension of duration of planning permission for this development. In addition to this permitted facility, located within easy access of the Plan Area, the provision of GP practices and Dentists will be encouraged within the new neighbourhood centre and/or along secondary routes within Woodbrook.

vi. Other Local Facilities and Amenities

The Plan Area will capitalise and build upon community and social infrastructure that exists within the wider area, creating a synergy between new and existing facilities. Facilities to support and promote a sustainable residential development do not consist alone of purpose built / physical structures. Green spaces, streets and civic areas for example offer excellent opportunities for communities to meet and mix and are important elements in the creation of a new community and a providing a sense of place.

The Plan Area contains Shanganagh Park which offers excellent passive and active open space opportunities. New open spaces, in addition to Park, will be promoted throughout the Plan Area. Such new areas do not necessarily need to consist of large tracts of green / parkland open space, but they could be in the form of smaller landscaped civic squares, play areas or outdoor seating associated with neighbourhood centre facilities. All outdoor spaces should be inviting, attractive, safe and above all, they should integrate well with future residential development and should be readily accessible by all users.



Photo 7: Shanganagh Park House

3.2.5 Policy and Objectives

Policy WS2: It is the Policy of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council:

To ensure that proper community infrastructure and complementary neighbourhood facilities – including essential supporting social infrastructure such as schools, community amenities and childcare facilities - are provided concurrently with the residential units at Woodbrook-Shanganagh as a new residential growth node and sustainable community.

It is an Objective of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council:

CS1:	To support and encourage the provision of community, cultural, recreational and social infrastructure facilities, within the Woodbrook-Shanganagh LAP, including the provision of civic spaces, green amenity areas and quality public realm that provide an attractive setting for future residents and visitors.
CS2:	To promote and encourage public access to high quality community and social infrastructure that supports a sustainable residential neighbourhood.
CS3:	To restore / rehabilitate Shanganagh Castle, as appropriate and feasible, with the provision of an appropriate mix of publically accessible community focused uses.
CS4:	To explore the potential for the provision of a social innovation facility within Shanganagh Castle.
CS5:	To coordinate with the Department of Education and Skills in the adequate and appropriate provision of schools within the Plan Area. In this regard, a new primary school within Woodbrook will be required in accordance with the requirements of the County Development Plan 2016-2022 and the Department of Education and Skills.
CS6:	To require that any proposed residential development includes a detailed childcare requirement assessment and provides adequate childcare facilities to serve Woodbrook and Shanganagh in accordance with the County Development Plan 2016-2022, Policy SIC11: Childcare Facilities.
CS7:	To require the provision of a suitably scaled mixed use neighbourhood centre within the Woodbrook lands to cater for local needs and that is secondary to neighbourhood facilities within Shankill.
CS8:	To promote optimum use of community and social infrastructure facilities and encourage shared / dual use of existing and future facilities.
CS9:	To promote the development of good street design that offers safe and attractive walking and cycling routes connecting residential developments to supporting community support facilities both within the Plan and the wider environs.