

9 Landscape, Heritage and Biodiversity



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Vision: To establish and foster a “Green Structure” in the County that ensures features of natural heritage are protected, important wildlife habitats are conserved, biodiversity is enhanced, the beauty of the landscape is enriched and maintained and passive and active recreational uses are accommodated in a sensitive manner- all the while acknowledging that the protection of the natural heritage and amenity assets of the County needs to be balanced against the legitimate need to continue to develop Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown in a positive and sustainable fashion.

9.1 Introduction

The landscape, heritage and biodiversity of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown are some of the most important assets of the County. Indeed, to a great degree they actually define the County. The heritage of the County encompasses built, archaeological, cultural and natural heritage, while the extensive network of public parks and open spaces provide important areas for passive and active recreation as well as key spaces for enhancing biodiversity. The County is framed by its coastal and upland landscapes and a range of landscape character areas between the mountains and the sea testify to the variety of those landscapes in what is the smallest administrative County in Ireland.

All of these assets are integral to the County’s image, and add greatly to the quality of life, of both residents and visitors to the County. They set the physical context to the daily experiences of those who live, work and visit Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown. The landscape, heritage and biodiversity of the County are also valuable economic assets. The effective management of these assets is therefore integral to the future successful development of the County.

In a largely urban area such as Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, matters of landscape, heritage and biodiversity necessarily go hand in hand with the development of the County. Through greater levels of information, communication and imaginative design, however, conflicts can be minimised and it should be possible for the County to continue to grow in vitality whilst retaining its distinct characteristics.

The key challenges facing the landscape, heritage and biodiversity of the County are:

- Balancing the needs of the built, archaeological, cultural and natural heritage of the County with the legitimate need to continue to develop Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County in a positive and sustainable manner.
- Increasing the awareness among all sections of the population of the importance of the County’s landscape, heritage and biodiversity.
- The formulation of appropriate and considered policies for the protection, enhancement and management of the heritage of the County while recognising that this heritage is not a static entity but is constantly evolving and changing.
- Recognising that landscape is the overall key facet which forms the “glue” binding all areas of heritage and to fully integrate environmental considerations into other Development Plan policies to ensure cross compliance of the Plan.
- Ensure the County’s Heritage Plan is kept relevant and to update and refresh the Plan as appropriate in accordance with best practice and to respond to changing circumstances.
- Recognising the close relationship between the landscape, natural heritage and recreational open spaces. The distribution of landscape, natural heritage and recreational assets around the County are vitally important to creating an accessible County. All areas of the County should have access to nature, parks and strategic public open space.
- The creation of a strategic vision for a “Green Structure” in accordance with the recommendations of the National Spatial Strategy to help manage the future landscape of the County giving due regard to recreation, biodiversity, built and archaeological heritage. The “Green Structure” should endeavour to foster a network of habitats and create clear linkages to help bind the existing patchwork of open spaces and green corridors that permeate the County.

The Council shall set up procedures to ensure compliance by plan-makers with the requirement of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive for land use plans. All subsequent plan-making and adoption of plans arising from this Plan will be screened for

the need to undertake Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

The rationale for a Green Structure is set out in the National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020 where the prime consideration, from an environmental point of view is to maintain the distinction between cities, towns and countryside and to prevent further erosion of the respective advantages of both rural and urban areas. Its objective is:

- › To prevent urban sprawl.
- › To reduce the loss of agricultural and other land to urban uses.
- › To protect rural identity and reduce disruption to farming by keeping rural-urban distinctions as clear as possible.
- › To create a green setting for cities and towns, which will provide people with opportunities for outdoor recreation within easy reach of their homes.
- › To conserve and, where appropriate and possible, enhance biodiversity.

This chapter is divided into 3 sub-sections:

- › Landscape
- › Heritage and Biodiversity
- › The Coast and the Mountains.

9.2 Landscape

The landscape of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown is a dynamic and living landscape. It is not a static entity but is the outcome of thousands of years of action and interaction between natural and human factors.

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown contains significant areas of landscape importance. The importance of these areas is particularly key due both to the established built-up nature of the majority of the County and the continuing pattern of densification and intensification. There is a clear presumption in favour of conserving, maintaining and enhancing the landscape character of the County to enable those living within, and those visiting Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown to reap the benefits of the high quality environment and leisure and recreation amenities which this landscape facilitates.

Section 10 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 requires that a Development Plan shall include objectives relating to the preservation of the character of the landscape, including the preservation of views and prospects and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty or interest. (See also Section 16.3).





9.2.1 Policy LHB1: Preservation of Landscape Character Areas

It is Council policy to continue to preserve and enhance the character of the County's landscape in accordance with the recommended strategies as originally outlined in the Landscape Character Assessment (May 2002) and in accordance with the "Draft Guidelines for Landscape and Landscape Assessment" (2000) as issued by the Department of Environment and Local Government.

The Council will take a proactive approach to the landscape with policies that seek to conserve and enhance the strongly distinctive landscape character of the County by protecting landscape elements of significance that are intrinsically important or contribute to the general amenity of the County. Landscape assets are non-renewable resources that the County Council will seek to protect.

In 2002, during the preparation of the 2004-2010 County Development Plan, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown carried out a Landscape Character Assessment of the primarily rural areas of the County. This identified 13 Landscape Character Areas - including Cherrywood-Rathmichael - with a recommended strategy for each area. It is considered that the broad thrust of that 2002 Assessment, and the associated strategies, remains reasonably robust. The Assessment has however been revised and updated to take account of any obvious changes in the intervening six years. The updated Landscape Character Assessment is attached as Appendix F.

The extensive south-western rural part of the County focuses primarily around the foothills of the Dublin Mountains and the higher plateau areas around Carrickgollogan, Ballycorus, Kiltiernan and Ballyman. These areas are a potential major amenity for both active and passive recreational uses. In recognition of the special environment and the distinctive character of the Rathmichael, Ballycorus areas, the County Development Plan will seek to maintain the rural character of these areas including the protection of hedgerows, woodlands, flora and fauna. In terms of Development Plan policy the issues raised by the rural foothill areas of the County relate primarily to balancing the need for broad social and economic development with protecting the area against pressure for inappropriate development generated by its relatively close proximity to Metropolitan Dublin.

9.2.2 Policy LHB2: High Amenity Zones

It is Council policy to conserve and enhance existing High Amenity zones and to seek to manage these and other areas to absorb further recreational uses and activity without damaging the amenities that affords them their special character.

The zoning maps of the County Development Plan highlight areas that are zoned as High Amenity areas. These areas consist of landscapes of special value where inappropriate development would contribute to a significant diminution of the landscape setting of the County. These areas include the Glencullen Valley, Glendoo Valley and Kilmashogue Valley. The areas adjacent to the

High Amenity areas are also sensitive landscapes as development in these areas may affect directly or indirectly the quality of the High Amenity areas.

Within zoned High Amenity areas the Council will generally resist any development not related directly to the area’s amenity potential or its existing use for agriculture, mountain or hill farming.

9.2.3 Policy LHB3: Historic Landscape Character Areas

In assessing development proposals it is Council policy to have regard to the recommendations and findings of the Historic Landscape Character Assessments (HLCA) undertaken for the urban rural-fringe areas of the County.

Five Historic Landscape Character Assessments (HLCA) have been carried out in the County – Barnacullia, Kiltiernan, Glencullen, Ballycorus and Rathmichael and Old Conna. These HLCA’s cover areas generally on the urban-rural fringe and are thus most likely to come under development pressure during the course of the Plan.

An HCLA is a detailed holistic study of the historical development and environmental significance of an area. The HLCA offers a dynamic perspective of the total landscape, thereby contributing to the management and promotion of sustainable development within the areas.

9.2.4 Policy LHB4: Views and Prospects

It is Council policy to protect and encourage the enjoyment of views and prospects of special amenity value or special interests.

The County contains many sites, areas and vantage points from which views over areas of great natural beauty, local landmarks, historic landscapes, adjoining Counties and the City of Dublin may be obtained. In addition to scenic views, the County also contains important prospects i.e. prominent landscapes or areas of special amenity value or special interest which are visible from the surrounding area. Views and prospects for protection have been identified in the Plan. The Council will take into account the views and prospects of adjoining Counties – Wicklow and South Dublin - in assessing planning applications for development in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown.

In the implementation of this policy it is the intention of the Council to:

- Prevent development, which would block or otherwise interfere with a view, which is designated for protection.
- Preserve the prospects listed in the Plan.

In evaluating planning applications for development in the foreground of identified views and prospects, consideration will be given to the effect such development may have on the view or prospect.

Where possible it is the intention of the Council to improve the viewing potential by seeking the removal or lowering of walls or other structures.

Roads or other public areas from which there is a view worthy of protection are shown on the Development Plan Maps. Prospects (i.e. the distant object, notably mountains, being viewed), the preservation of which is an objective of the Council, are listed in Table 9.1 below:

Table 9.1 Prospects to be Preserved

Dublin City and Bay from Deerpark, Mount Merrion
Carrickgollogan from Ballybrack (e.g. Church Road and Churchview Road)
Carrickgollogan from Bray Road (Shankill to Bray area)
Carrickgollogan from Ballyman Road
Carrickgollogan from the Enniskerry Road (south of Kiltiernan Village)
The Scalp from Ballyman Road and part of the Enniskerry Road
Three Rock Mountain and Two Rock Mountain from the Enniskerry Road (Sandyford -Kiltiernan area) and Sandyford Village
Three Rock Mountain and Two Rock Mountain from the Ballybrack Road
Three Rock Mountain and Kilmashogue Mountain from Marlay Park
Tibradden Mountain and Kilmashogue Mountain from Kilmashogue Lane
Glencullen Mountain and Valley from the Ballybrack Road
Glendoo Mountain from the Ballybrack Road
Dalkey Hill from Ulverton Road, Station Road and the East Pier
Killiney Hill from Vico Road, Station Road and the East Pier

Additional views and prospects can be identified through the day-to-day development management process, the formulation of Local Area Plans and other forward planning documents and through future reviews of the list.

9.3 Heritage and Biodiversity

The natural heritage of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown includes flora, fauna, geology and landscape. This variety of life is often referred to as biological diversity or “biodiversity”.

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, stretching from the coastal strip along Dublin Bay to the uplands of the Dublin Mountains, has a wide range of habitats. These include coastal environments, urban gardens, parks and other areas of managed amenity grassland such as golf courses, woodlands (natural, semi-natural and commercial), hedgerows, rivers and streams, areas of upland grassland and agricultural holdings and upland heath and bog. The condition and preservation of these natural habitats directly and indirectly impacts on the quality of life of the residents and visitors to the County. While agricultural and upland habitats predominates in the southern/southwestern quadrant of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, urban environments dominate the northern and eastern sectors of the County. While wildlife habitats occur throughout the County many animals, birds, invertebrates and wild plants have adapted to co-exist alongside mankind in the urban environment.

9.3.1 Policy LHB5: Heritage and Protection of the Environment

It is Council policy to protect and conserve the environment including, in particular, the architectural, archaeological and natural heritage of the County and in particular to conserve, manage and protect nationally important and EU designated sites including Special Protection Areas and proposed Natural Heritage Areas.

Implementation of this policy will involve, inter alia:

- › Retention of trees, hedgerows and woodlands wherever practical.
- › Making Special Amenity Area Orders where appropriate.
- › Designation of High Amenity zones and Coastal Amenity zones.
- › Designation of Green Belt areas.
- › Identification of views and prospects of special amenity value or special interest.
- › Identification, and mapping, of public rights of way and other strategic access routes.
- › Designation of sites of geological and geomorphological importance.
- › Designation of a Special Protection Area (Birds).
- › Designation of proposed Candidate Special Areas of Conservation.

- › Designation of proposed Natural Heritage Areas.
- › Designation of Areas of Archaeological Potential.
- › Protection of existing access (including established rights of way) to such sites where feasible and the promotion of public access where it does not exist at present - subject to ensuring the highest environmental standards.

9.3.2 Policy LHB6: Heritage Plan

It is Council policy to implement the current Heritage Plan and to produce a second Heritage Plan (2009-2014) for Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown which will be set within the context of the National Heritage Plan published by the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands. In preparing the second County Heritage Plan it will be an objective of the Council to ensure a balance between protection of heritage and the implementation of other, often competing, policies in the Development Plan, and have due regard to each.

Heritage as defined by the Heritage Act (1995) includes monuments, archaeological objects, heritage objects, architectural heritage, flora, fauna, wildlife habitats, landscapes, seascapes, wrecks, geology, heritage parks and gardens and inland waterways.

The principal aim of the first Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Heritage Plan 2004-2008 was to enhance the conservation and preservation of the heritage of the County.

The implementation of the current 2004-2008 Heritage Plan has resulted in the completion of a number of projects that increased the level of knowledge, awareness and understanding of the heritage of the County. Due regard should be given to these documents in any future development. These include the:

- › Industrial Heritage Survey
- › Historic Landscape Character Assessments for Kiltiernan, Glencullen, Rathmichael, Old Conna, Barnacullia and Ballycorus
- › Survey of Coastal Architecture
- › Architectural Assessment of Georges Street, Dún Laoghaire
- › Habitat Survey
- › Hedgerow Survey

The new 2009-2014 Heritage Plan will build on the work and projects already completed and will generally seek to identify, preserve, conserve, manage and enhance the enjoyment of the heritage of the County. The Heritage Plan will be formulated in partnership and consultation with other partners and agencies in a spirit of shared



responsibility. It will be a five-year Plan and will be realistic and costed.

9.3.3 Policy LHB7: Biodiversity Plan

It is Council Policy to implement the County Biodiversity Plan 2008-2012 and have due regard to the recommendations arising from its implementation in accordance with the National Biodiversity Plan, prepared by the Department of the Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, (2002).

The primary features of the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Biodiversity Plan are:

- To translate international, European and Irish policies and obligations into effective local action on the ground.
- To provide a framework for the conservation of biodiversity of national and local importance.
- To collect biodiversity information on the County.
- To raised public awareness of biodiversity issues and to coordinate existing and new initiatives.
- To provide a basis for monitoring the success of biodiversity conservation at a local, regional and a national level.

9.3.4 Policy LHB8: Special Protection Area (Birds), Proposed Natural Heritage Areas and Candidate Special Areas of Conservation

It is Council policy to protect and preserve areas designated as Proposed Natural Heritage Areas, proposed Candidate Special Areas of Conservation, and Special Protection Areas.

There are a range of sites in the County that are designated under national and EU legislation. The National Parks and Wildlife Service designates Special Protection Areas (Wildbirds) and proposed Special Areas of Conservation under the EU Birds and Habitats Directives respectively. Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) are designated to conserve species and habitats of national importance as well as sites of geological interest. All of the sites designated for natural heritage protection are part of a European network of designated sites called “Natura 2000”.

In order to comply with the European Union Directive 1979/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds (*the Birds Directive*), the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government published, in July 2008, a proposal to designate much of South Dublin Bay as a Special Protection Area under Article 4 of the Birds Directive.

The SPA designation has been extended to include the West Pier of Dún Laoghaire Harbour and concerns have been raised in relation to the implications of possible amenity developments within these proposed designated sites. Generally an Environmental Impact Assessment and/or

Appropriate Assessment of the proposed impact of the development on the SPA will be required in order to demonstrate that the development will not have a significant impact on the SPA.

All designated sites are shown on the Development Plan Maps and are set out in the Table 9.2 below.

Table 9.2: Designated Sites of International and National Importance

Site No.	Site	pSPA	pNHA	cSAC
1	South Dublin Bay, Tolka Estuary and Booterstown Marsh	X	X	X
2	Dalkey Coastal Zone and Killiney Hill/Rocheshill		X	
4	Fitzsimons Wood		X	
5	Dingle Glen		X	
6	Loughlinstown Wood		X	
8	Knocksink Wood		X	X
9	Ballybetagh Bog		X	
10	Ballyman Glen		X	X
11	Wicklow Mountains		X	X

pSPA Proposed Special Protection Area (Birds)
 pNHA Proposed Natural Heritage Area
 cSAC Candidate Special Areas of Conservation

9.3.5 Policy LHB9: Non-Designated Areas of Biodiversity Importance

It is Council policy to protect and promote the conservation of biodiversity in areas of natural heritage importance outside designated areas and to ensure that features of biodiversity importance including species protected under the Wildlife Acts 1976 and 2000, the Birds Directive 1979, and the Habitats Directive 1992 are adequately protected. Ecological assessments will be carried out for all developments in areas that support, or have potential to support, features of biodiversity importance or protected species and appropriate mitigation/avoidance measures will be implemented. In implementing this policy, regard shall be had to the recommendations and objectives of the Green City Guidelines (2008).

The biodiversity of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown is not just contained within specifically designated areas but is found throughout the County. Many areas that do not have formal protection under legislation still possess a level of natural heritage importance, which needs to be recognised and protected where possible. These areas include hedgerows, trees, rivers, streams, private gardens and other urban green spaces. Other areas of important biodiversity in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown include graveyards, cemeteries and the green spaces associated with institutional lands.

Protecting individual areas in isolation is neither appropriate nor effective. It is important that significant wildlife habitat areas and corridors should be respected to protect and conserve the flora and fauna of the County. It is through the



conservation of ecological infrastructure such as hedgerows and riparian corridors that a linked network of sites can be developed. The Council will encourage the linkage of parks and greenways throughout the County.

The Council will ensure that the impact of new developments on biodiversity is minimised and will seek to include measures for the enhancement of biodiversity in all proposals for large urban developments. The recently published “*Green City Guidelines*” prepared by UCD Urban Institute Ireland, Fingal County Council and Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council provides general guidance and advice on how best to retain and enhance biodiversity in new medium-to-high density urban developments. (See also Section 16.12 and 16.7).

9.3.6 Policy LHB10: Rivers and Waterways

It is Council policy to maintain and protect the natural character and ecological value of the river and stream corridors in the County and where possible to enhance existing channels and to encourage diversity of habitat. It is also policy (subject to the sensitivity of the riverside habitat) to provide public access to riparian corridors to promote improved passive recreational activities.

Existing County flood plain management policy seeks to limit development in identified floodplains and to preserve riparian corridors. Development proposals in river corridors will be considered favourably providing they:

- Dedicate a minimum of 10m each side of the waters edge for amenity, biodiversity and walkway purposes where practical.
- Preserve the biodiversity of the site.
- Do not involve land filling, diverting, culverting or realignment of river or stream corridors.
- Do not have a negative effect on the distinctive character and appearance of the waterway corridor and the specific characteristic and landscape elements of the specific site and its context.

Rivers and Waterways are very important assets of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown. Any works which will impact on watercourses will be undertaken in consultation with the Eastern Regional Fisheries Board and must adhere to best practice guidelines as outlined in the ERFB’s “*Requirements for the Protection of Fisheries Habitat During Construction and Development Works at River Sites*”. Riparian corridors, defined as those areas that are physically or visually linked to the waterway are multi-functional in nature. They:

- Provide important visual amenity for the County as a whole.

- Allow for the provision and enhancement of wildlife habitats and natural corridors.
- Provide opportunities for waterfront developments, new recreational facilities and leisure activities.
- Provide opportunities for tourist related development.
- Provide for drainage and flooding.

The County Biodiversity Plan has identified the Loughlinstown and Shanganagh Rivers as important river corridors meriting further protection.

9.3.7 Policy LHB11: Trees and Urban Woodlands

It is Council policy that trees, groups of trees or woodlands particularly where they form a significant feature in the landscape or, are important in setting the character of ecology of an area shall be preserved wherever possible. New urban woodlands will be planted in areas deficient in tree coverage and/or associated within new development nodes and infrastructure programmes.

It is the Council’s intention, within the lifetime of this Plan to prepare a Tree Policy aimed at ensuring the management and sustainability of the County’s existing tree resources whilst increasing the overall quantum of tree coverage in the County.

Trees are critical natural assets because they provide a range of crosscutting benefits to the cultural, educational, environmental and economic life of the county. These benefits include significant contributions to the landscape, local visual amenity and biodiversity of the County.

Certain trees, groups of trees and woodlands have been identified on the Development Plan Maps. It is intended that these trees be protected and maintained. Robust and appropriate levels of protection should be provided for trees and tree groups identified with a long term aim of linking groups together to provide more robust tree assemblages. Landowners are responsible for the management and care of trees on their property. (See also Chapter 10: Open Space and Recreation).

9.3.8 Policy LHB12: Hedgerows

It is Council policy to protect hedgerows in the County from development, which would impact adversely upon them. It is Council policy to promote the County’s hedgerows by increasing coverage, where possible, using locally native species and to develop an appropriate code of practice for road hedgerow maintenance.

The 2007 Habitat Survey identified a pattern of hedgerows and tree lines with the majority of these occurring in the south of the county (south of the M50 Motorway and east of the southern end

of the N11 road). Hedgerows were also identified as important heritage and biodiversity features in the County Biodiversity Plan which identified a survey of hedgerows as a targeted action.

In 2008, a Hedgerow Survey Report informed Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council of the most important hedgerows in the county in terms of their biodiversity. These have been mapped and recorded.

9.3.9 Policy LHB13: Geological Sites

It is Council policy to protect sites of Geological and Geomorphological importance, in particular proposed Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and County Geological Sites (CGS) that become designated during the lifetime of this Plan.

To date, sites of geological interest have not been comprehensively included under the existing nature conservation designations. The Geological Survey of Ireland, in partnership with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) are now currently addressing the matter through the identification

of the best nationally significant geological and geo-morphological sites for statutory designations as NHAs (Natural Heritage Areas). Other geological sites of national or local importance are being identified as County Geological Sites (CGS) and by their recognition in the County Development Plans, will be protected from potentially damaging developments through the Development Management System. The list of Geological Sites is set out in Table 9.3. The list has been prepared in conjunction with the Geological Survey of Ireland.

9.3.10 Policy LHB14: Green Belts

It is Council policy to retain the individual physical character of towns and development areas by the designation of green belt areas where appropriate.

The function of this policy is to protect the special amenity and biodiversity value of countryside while providing a visual break between urban areas. The Council will continue to retain a green belt between Bray and Shankill for the lifetime of this Plan.

Table 9.3: Geological Sites

MAP No.	Site Name	Easting	Northing	Principal Characteristics Critical Feature(s) key words	Definite pNHA	Probable pNHA	Definite CGS
8	Three Rock Mountain	717625	723129	Tors			X
13	Ballybetagh Bog	719925	720029	Chronology, Giant Deer	X		
13	The Scalp	720924	720029	Glacial Outwash, Black Scree and spillway		X	
13	Ballycorus	722224	721629	Leinster Granite and associated mineralization			X
7	Killiney Hill	725923	725028	Killinite mineral	X		
7	Killiney Hill	725923	725028	Roche moutonnees, till			X
4,7	Dalkey Hill	726323	726028	Leinster Granite Quarries		X	
4	Killiney Adit	726423	725728	Phosgenite mineral			X
4	White Rock, Killiney	726423	725728	Leinster Granite contact with Ordovician sediments		X	
7,10, 14	Killiney Bay (Bray Harbour to Killiney Station)	726023 (Killiney), 3726823 (Bray)	724828 (Killiney), 729329 (Bray)	5.3km long coastal section of glacial sediments (interbedded diamicts)	X		
2	Blackrock Breccia	721424	729627	Granite Breccia			X
4	Dalkey Island	727773	726353	Water Well			X
10	Shankill	726223	722029	Mass wasting (slumping)	X		

pNHA Proposed Natural Heritage Area
CGS County Geological Site

9.3.11 Policy LHB15: Historic Demesnes and Gardens

It is Council policy that historic demesnes and gardens should be identified and protected in view of their significance as part of the national heritage. The following houses and gardens are listed: Cabinteely House, Marlay House, Fernhill and Old Conna.

9.3.12 Policy LHB 16: Information Plaques

It is Council policy to promote the erection of appropriately designed and located information plaques on buildings in order to promote awareness of the County's history, as embodied in the built heritage.

There are a number of plaques on private and public buildings commemorating events or people. These plaques are an important part of the cultural heritage of the County and care should be taken that these information plaques are not removed.

9.4 The Coast and the Mountains

The Coast and the Dublin Mountains of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown are clearly both significant features of the County. They are also both used for a wide variety of purposes - amenity, recreation, commercial, industrial, sporting and military. They are areas of high landscape quality, natural heritage and amenity value.

The 17km coastline of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown is diverse varying from rocky headlands with a

variety of inlets, long established harbours and high quality beaches. The Blue Flag status at Seapoint and Killiney Bay will be aimed for during the duration of the Development Plan. The Coast is an important economic resource, in particular for the fishing, aquaculture, leisure and tourism industries.

The Coast is also home to a variety of important habitats and species. This is reflected in the number of designated sites of national and international importance along its length, including South Dublin Bay, Booterstown Marsh and the Dalkey Coastal Zone.

The Coast is increasingly important for the range of recreational activities it offers (e.g. sailing and swimming) and for its amenities (e.g. Beaches). Improved public access needs to be provided to the coastal strip including walking and cycling routes. It is important that the coastal zone be managed and developed in a way which protects and enhances its natural heritage and landscape. In this context, the development of an Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan will be necessary.

The impacts of predicted sea level rises due to climate change need to be considered while development in coastal areas must recognise the need for coastal protection.

The Dublin Mountains have long been a place of public recreation and enjoyment. The Dublin Mountains form a distinct southern edge to the Dublin conurbation, but with the ongoing growth of the metropolitan area in terms of





not only population growth but also extending geographical land area being developed for residential, business and industry uses, this growth has been accompanied by increasing recreational pressures on the Dublin Mountains as an accessible resource for both active and passive recreational pursuits.

Traditionally, the recreational use of the Dublin Mountains would have been primarily for activities such as walking, road cycling, dog exercising, picnicking etc. which capitalised upon the scenic qualities of the Mountains and the panoramic vistas over Dublin. Today there are a wider range of recreational pursuits taking place in the Mountains including mountain biking, orienteering and mountain running.

9.4.1 **Policy LHB17: Coastal Zone Management and Dublin Bay**

It is Council policy to co-operate with the Coastal Zone Management Division of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food in the preparation of the national stocking exercise and in the preparation and implementation of a national Coastal Zone Management Strategy. It is also Council Policy to co-operate with the Dublin Bay Task Force in the preparation of a Dublin Bay Master Plan in partnership with local communities, the general public, user organisations and statutory authorities.

The coastal zone extends seaward and landward of the coastline and its limits are determined by the

geographical extent of natural coastline processes and human activities associated with the coast. Sustainable development in coastal areas is best achieved through a process of Coastal Zone Management (CZM), Coastal Zone Management involves the management of human activities and natural processes and work in coastal areas and aims to promote a partnership approach to planning and management in the coastal zone involving all stakeholders.

A statutory body, the Dublin Bay Task Force, was established in July 2008 to co-ordinate, manage, develop and protect the waters and lands surrounding Dublin Bay and to maximise the potential of Dublin Bay for the people. It is envisaged that this Master Plan shall be developed in conjunction with a Coastal Zone Management Plan for Dublin Bay. It will also deal with questions of climate change and projected rises in sea levels.

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown has engaged Consultants to carry out a Coastal Defence Strategy Report, which is to be completed in early 2009. The study will detail a coastal protection strategy identifying specific coastal protection measures on a priority basis and undertake a risk assessment of the vulnerability of the study area and hinterland to both erosion and coastal flooding. The Council will develop a prioritised programme of coastal protection measures following the completion of the Strategy.

9.4.2 Policy LHB18: Parks, Coastline and Harbours

It is Council policy to continue to improve recreational and tourism-related amenities in its public parks along the coastline and at the harbours for access by the general public.

It is an objective of this Council to maintain the Coal Harbour area of Dún Laoghaire Harbour as a publicly accessible facility.

9.4.3 Policy LHB19: Beaches

It is Council policy to promote the use of beaches for amenity and recreational use.

The areas traditionally used for bathing in the County include:

- › Booterstown Beach
- › Blackrock Bathing Place
- › Seapoint
- › Sandycove Harbour & Beach
- › 40 ft. Swimming Area
- › Bulloch Harbour
- › White Rock Beach
- › Killiney Strand
- › Vico Bathing Area
- › Corbawn

The Council will continue to develop the County's beaches in co-operation with local and environmental interest groups. Public access to all beaches will be provided.

The Council shall comply with the provisions of the *Bathing Water Regulations* to ensure that where any bathing water fails the mandatory bathing standards that the public are made aware of this fact by means of information notices posted at the bathing area. The Council will strive to achieve and maintain Blue Flag standards at Seapoint and Killiney.

The Council shall ensure compliance with Directive on bathing water (Directive 2996/7/EC) as implemented by the *Bathing Water Quality Regulations 2008* (S.I. No. 79) of 2008 and particular to:

- › Ensure bathing waters achieve "sufficient or better status by 2015"
- › Increase the number of bathing waters classified as "good" or "excellent".

9.4.4 Policy LHB20: The Metals

It is Council policy to manage and enhance The Metals from the Peoples Park to Dalkey giving due regard to its historic importance while encouraging its use as a walking route between Dún Laoghaire and Dalkey.

The Metals is an historic industrial pathway that runs between Dún Laoghaire and Dalkey which was originally created to transport stone from the quarry at Dalkey to the harbour works in Dún Laoghaire. Today the pathway is an important recreational amenity-walking route.

9.4.5 Policy LHB21: Dublin Mountains Strategic Plan

It is Council policy to support the vision and objectives of the Dublin Mountains Strategic Plan for Development of Outdoor Recreation (2007-2017) including the formation of a Dublin Mountain Way.

In 2006 Dublin Mountains Partnership (DMP) was formed, comprising representatives from Coillte, South Dublin County Council, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, National Parks and Wildlife (NPWS) and the Dublin Mountains Initiative (DMI). The Dublin Mountains Partnership was established to oversee the preparation of a 10 year Strategic Plan for Development of Outdoor Recreation in the Dublin Mountains area. The overall objective was to develop an integrated outdoor recreation plan for the area linking existing and potential recreation components- in particular forests and other public or state owned lands with recreational potential and including access routes- with the ultimate aim of improving the recreational experience for users of the Dublin Mountains, whilst recognising the objectives and constraints of various landowners. A Specific objective identified is the development of an interpretive centre and this has been mapped on Map 11.

9.4.6 Policy LHB22: Public Rights of Way

It is Council policy to:

- › **Preserve, protect, promote and improve for the common good all existing public rights of way which contribute to general amenity.**
- › **Create new rights of way or extend or enhance existing rights of way in the interest of amenity either by agreement with landowners or through the use of compulsory purchasing powers in the interest of ensuring access to amenities, including the coast, upland areas, lake shores, river banks, heritage sites and National Monuments.**
- › **Create rights of way to provide linkages from the built up areas to the countryside and the coast.**
- › **Prohibit development and keep free from obstruction existing rights of way, and to take legal action if necessary, to prevent any attempt to close them off.**

- > **Prohibit development which would prejudice public access to existing rights of way, unless the level of amenity is maintained by the right of way, footpath, or bridleway being diverted by the minimum practical distance and the route continues to be segregated from vehicular traffic.**
- > **Consider favourably planning applications which include proposals to improve the condition and appearance of existing rights of way.**

The Council will use its powers under the Planning Acts to preserve and maintain existing rights of way, to create new ones where appropriate, and to promote their greater use in amenity areas. In addition, the Council may seek to incorporate the creation of pedestrian ways as a condition of a planning permission to link amenities, facilities and points of interest.

The Council is committed to ensuring that access by the public to amenity areas is retained. It is an objective of the Council to secure the retention of established public rights of way as set out in Appendix G. (See also Section 12.2.9: Policy T23: Directional/Information/Way marking Signage).

9.4.7 **Policy LHB23: Recreation Access Routes**

It is Council policy to preserve all Recreation Access Routes which contribute to general amenity.

The 2004-2010 Development Plan contained proposals for a number of public rights of ways. The current Plan furthers this by proposing Recreation Access Routes within the land under the control of Coillte lands. Coillte Teoranta, the State Forestry Board, was established to manage the public forest built up since the commencement of state planting and is the largest provider of forest recreation in Ireland. Coillte's commitment to recreation is underpinned by the adoption of the Dublin Mountains Strategic Plan for Outdoor Recreation 2007-2017. It is an objective of the Council to secure the retention of established Recreation Access Routes as set out in Appendix G. (See also Section 12.2.9: Policy T23: Directional/Information/Waymarking Signage).

9.4.8 **Policy LHB24: National Park**

It is Council policy to cooperate in the extension of the Wicklow Mountains National Park.

9.4.9 **Policy LHB25: Trails, Hiking and Walking Routes**

It is Council policy to promote the development of regional and local networks of hiking and walking routes and trails and to develop Sli na Slainte Routes. These should be waymarked/

signposted and listed where feasible and appropriate.

Implementation of this policy may involve the development of special interest features such as cultural walks designed around a number of literary personalities, and long distance hiking trails taking advantage of the Dublin Mountains (e.g. The Dublin Mountain Way from Shankill village to the Scalp). The Council will co-operate with other relevant agencies, both public and private, and local landowners as appropriate with a view to increasing such routes, particularly in upland areas. This will include consultation with adjoining Local Authorities with a view to promoting routes extending beyond the County boundaries. Steps to encourage such routes may include safe parking, publication of maps and the provision of other appropriate facilities for users of such routes. Where possible and appropriate, established hiking and walking routes will be signposted. (See also Section 12.2.9: Policy T23: Directional/Information/Waymarking Signage).

9.4.10 **Policy LHB26: Indicative Forestry Strategy**

It is Council policy to take full account of the Indicative Forestry Strategy (Draft 2008) produced by the Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

The Forest Service (Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food) is the national forest authority and is responsible for forest policy and the promotion of private forest.

The Indicative Forestry Strategy provides high level, national guidance as to the suitability of land for afforestation and facilitates the establishment of high quality forests serving a variety of purposes including timber production, enhancement of the environment, mitigation of climate change, forest industry development, creation of alternative development, creation of alternative off-farm incomes and opportunities for tourism and amenity use. The Indicative Forestry Strategy will help guide forestry development in the County.

9.4.11 **Policy LHB27: Strategic Environmental Assessment- Mitigation Measures**

It is Council policy to implement the mitigation measures as set out in Section 9.3 of the Environment Report accompanying the Development Plan, which are envisaged to prevent, reduce and, as fully as possible, offset any significant adverse impacts on the environment of implementing the County Development Plan.



10 Open Space and Recreation

10 Open Space and Recreation

Vision: To protect and enhance the established network of open spaces in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown and to ensure that a range of high quality, relevant and easily accessible recreational and leisure facilities and public spaces are readily available to meet the needs of all residents of, and visitors to, the County.

10.1 Introduction

Open space and recreational facilities are central to the delivery of sustainable communities. Such opportunities should be readily accessible to all sectors and age groups of the population. Good recreational facilities are fundamental in achieving a desirable quality of life and environment for existing and future residents, visitors and workers in the County. Local networks of high quality, well-managed and maintained open spaces, sports and recreational facilities help to enhance urban environments and should be planned to be easily accessible to as wide a population as possible.

The long-term value of quality open space and recreational facilities depends on coherent policies in the Development Plan, effective management and maintenance by the Council and strong community support. The planning system has a vital role to play in protecting open space from inappropriate development and to ensure that new developments include for quality open space and appropriate recreational infrastructure and/or contribute to the provision, development and enhancement of the wider open space network. With the increasing pressure for development and the continuing pattern towards higher densities in urban areas it is fundamental that new spaces and facilities are designed to the highest standards to ensure their potential usage and value is realised.

In strategic terms the overall objectives of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown in relation to open space and recreation are:

- › To provide networks of accessible, high quality open spaces and sport and recreation facilities, which meet the needs of residents and visitors, are fit for purpose and economically and environmentally sustainable.

- › To protect established green areas and public open spaces.
- › To protect and enhance recreational areas.
- › To manage and maintain public parks to the highest standard.
- › To provide new parks and green spaces with proper facilities in new development areas.
- › To develop and improve physical linkages and connections between the network of parks and public open spaces in the County.
- › To ensure proper access to the recreational facilities of the County for all.

10.2 Open Space and Parks

10.2.1 Policy OSR1: Green Space Strategy

It is Council Policy to undertake a comprehensive audit of the existing and proposed open space provision in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown and to prepare an all-encompassing Green Space Strategy for the County. The outputs and recommendations of that Strategy will be implemented as appropriate and as resources allow.

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council are currently undertaking a comprehensive review and audit of open space provision in the County which will set out the future policy direction in relation to active recreation, play and outdoor sports facilities. The Green Space Strategy will consider the open space resource in existing communities, how well the needs of communities are being met and identify any changes needed to improve access to quality open spaces. The Strategy will take account of the quality, community value and use of existing open space- not merely the quantum of provision. The Strategy will identify where deficiencies exist in terms of provision, where existing parks may need to be upgraded or new parks retrofitted as part of new development nodes.

In conjunction with the existing Parks Master Plan Programme, the new Green Space Strategy will enable proper planning of projects and infrastructural improvements into the future. The Strategy, when completed should help safeguard valued open space and guide the allocation of resources for future investment. In areas where deficiencies are identified it is the intention of the Council to acquire land as opportunities arise and resources permit to remedy such deficiencies.



10.2.2 Policy OSR2: Hierarchy of Parks and Open Space

It is Council Policy to provide a hierarchy of quality parks and public open spaces which vary in size and nature and are designed to serve the needs of all members of the community by being readily accessible and at a convenient distance from their home and/or places of work.

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown recognises that a hierarchy of public open space is essential to provide for the needs of the population and to plan for future development. Public open space shall be provided throughout Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown on a hierarchical basis, ranging in descending order from significant parks with countywide importance to small incidental spaces.

It is anticipated that the Green Space Strategy will provide further clarity and guidance in relation to both the implementation of possible layers of hierarchy and appropriate quantitative space standards. The public open space hierarchy currently operating in the County generally follows the categories outlined below.

Local/Neighbourhood Parks – Larger units of greenspace which provide for a wide range of activities including playing fields and encompass diverse landscape types

Environmental Open Space - Environmental open spaces are generally located within a housing area to create a visual break and to enable residents to spend time outdoors in attractive surroundings and provide opportunities for informal and casual

play. Roadside verges and other small, or narrow, incidental areas of open spaces are not included.

Greenways - Greenways are shared-use routes for non-motorised users, (walkers, cyclists, roller skaters, horse riders) where the majority of the route is normally through Green open space.

Urban Parks – Town Centre/Village Greens/Civic Space/Pocket Parks which act as a focus for urban centres.

10.2.3 Policy OSR3: Future Improvements

It is Council policy to continue to improve, landscape, plant and develop more intensive recreational and leisure facilities within its parks and open spaces insofar as resources will permit and that the development of appropriate complementary facilities does not detract from the overall amenities of the spaces.

There are over 800 hectares of parks and open spaces of varying landscape types throughout the County. There are currently five Flagship Parks:

- > Marlay Demesne
- > Cabinteely Park
- > The Peoples Park and Seafront, Dún Laoghaire
- > Blackrock Park
- > Killiney Hill Park

The Flagship Parks each have a unique character and theme, which provide an attraction for visitors and tourists. It is envisaged that during the period of this Plan, Shanganagh Castle may be brought into the ownership and control of the Council. The promotion of additional facilities here will enable Shanganagh Park to develop as the sixth Flagship Park in the County. The historic houses of Marlay and Cabinteely will continue to be refurbished and available for tours and other activities. With the exception of Killiney Hill Park it is intended that all Flagship Parks will include car parks, public toilets, tea rooms, event spaces and ornamental gardens.

Other smaller but nevertheless important local parks throughout the County include Kilbogget Park (Ballybrack); Shanganagh Park (Shankill); Meadowbrook Park (Dundrum); and Deerpark (Mount Merrion). A Parks Master Plan Programme is being progressed by the upgrading and development of the parks and open spaces throughout Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown. As part of the Green Space Strategy it will be an objective of the Council to identify an additional park facility and/or intensive recreational facilities in the south-west quadrant of the County.

10.2.4 Policy: OSR4: Public Open Space Standards

It is Council policy to promote public open space standards generally in accordance with recent Government guidance documents “Sustainable

Residential Development in Urban Areas-Guidelines for Planning Authorities” (DOEHLG, 2009) and the accompanying “Urban Design Manual- A Best Practice Guide”.

- > The “Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas - Guidelines for Planning Authorities” document (2009) provides detailed guidance on the provision of open space in new development areas. The Guidelines advocate that in new development areas, Local Area Plans should identify preferred locations for larger open spaces that would allow playing pitches and larger recreational facilities to be concentrated away from the housing areas but still easily accessible from them. The Guidelines emphasise the need for quality in public open spaces in terms of design, robustness accessibility, biodiversity and passive supervision/overlooking. There should also be a clear definition between public, semi-private and private spaces.

10.2.5 Policy OSR5: Allotments and Community Gardens

It is Council policy to support the development of additional public allotments and community gardens.

Public allotments and community gardens can have a number of benefits including the promotion of healthy lifestyles, biodiversity and providing a cheaper local and sustainable source of food. The Council will seek to identify additional sites for such activities.

10.2.6 Policy OSR6: Trees and Woodland

It is Council policy to prepare a Tree Strategy to ensure that the tree cover in the County is managed to optimise the environmental, climatic and educational benefits which derive from an ‘urban forest’.

It is the Council’s intention, within the lifetime of this Plan to prepare a Tree Policy aimed at ensuring the management and sustainability of the County’s existing tree resources whilst increasing the overall quantum of tree coverage in the County.

Trees, group of trees or woodlands which form a significant feature in the landscape or are important in setting the character or ecology of an area should be preserved wherever possible. They make a valuable contribution to the landscape and biodiversity of the County and significant groups of trees have been identified in the Development Plan Maps.

It is important that new planting is promoted to ensure continued regeneration of tree cover and to replace trees that are becoming increasingly old and unhealthy or are being lost as a consequence of development pressures. It is envisaged that the



Tree Strategy document will include proposals for the management of the tree cover and proposals for new planting programmes and projects. (See also Sections 9.3.7 and 16.7.4).

The Council will identify and act on opportunities to provide for new tree planting in conjunction with new urban design/development and infrastructure and will plan for new planting to add to the urban forest and improve the built environment. The term “urban forest” embraces trees grown in and close to urban areas, including trees in streets, parks, gardens, on underdeveloped land and those in urban woodlands.

10.2.7 Policy OSR7: Greenways Network

It is Council policy to develop a comprehensive network of County greenways linking parks and public open spaces and to work with adjoining local authorities and other stakeholders to achieve and improve external linkages.

Greenways are “shared-use routes for non-motorised users, (walkers, cyclists, roller skaters, horse riders) for pleasure, recreation, tourism and daily journeys”. They are generally routes which predominantly utilise established green spaces but can also cross and link to public roads. Greenways provide and expand recreational opportunities for walking, jogging and cycling and can often coincide with river/stream corridors and can promote free passage for wildlife. (See also Section 9.3.5: Policy LHB9: Non Designated Areas of Biodiversity Importance).

The following greenway routes have been identified and some sections are already in place. Further greenway corridors will be identified during the Plan period as opportunities present themselves.

- › Clonkeen Park via Kilbogget Park to the Coast (Shanganagh Cliffs)
- › Slang River Greenway (Dundrum Town Centre to Marlay Demesne and the Wicklow Way)
- › Loughlinstown River Greenway (Cabinteely Park via Cherrywood to the Coast at Shanganagh Cliffs)
- › Lamb’s Cross, Stepside to Carrickmines
- › Shanganagh Park to the Coast
- › Dodder River Valley
- › Blackrock Village to Booterstown
- › Sutton to Sandycove

10.2.8 Policy OSR8: Ballyogan Landfill

It is Council policy to continue the comprehensive remediation of the former Ballyogan landfill site following completion of the rehabilitation works as a new public park (Jamestown Park).

The former Ballyogan landfill – now decommissioned- is located adjacent to the new development areas of Stepside and Kiltiernan/ Glenamuck. Remediation works, on foot of the Environmental Protection Agency license requirements are well in train. When completed

the rehabilitated landfill will offer significant passive and active recreational opportunities for the new neighbourhoods being developed close by.

A Masterplan is currently being prepared for Jamestown Park which will allow for the lands to be developed as a significant recreational facility, forming an important linkage between a network of open spaces.

10.2.9 Policy OSR9: Sports and Recreational Facilities

It is Council policy to promote the provision and management of high quality sporting and recreational infrastructure throughout the County and to ensure that the particular needs of different groups are incorporated in to the planning and design of new facilities.

The benefits accruing from participation in sport and recreational activities are well documented. Sports facilities and grounds in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown include a variety of both indoor and outdoor recreational facilities, which provide in the main for the active recreational needs of the community. It is important that facilities are located where they are of most value and accessible to the community being served. Accessibility should be promoted primarily through public transport links and by walking/cycling. The Council will target specific communities/groups with currently low levels of participation and will focus on increasing awareness and access to sports, recreation and leisure in these identified areas.

10.2.10 Policy OSR10: Protection of Sports Grounds/Facilities

It is Council policy to ensure that adequate playing fields for formal active recreation are provided for in new development areas and that existing sports facilities and grounds within the established urban area are protected, retained and enhanced – all in accordance with the outputs and recommendations from the Green Space Strategy.

Guidance in relation to the provision of open space associated with new developments and new development areas is provided through the *“Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas- Guidelines for Planning Authorities”* (DOEHLG 2009). Within the established urban areas of the County, however, the lack of available sites means that new opportunities for recreational facilities (i.e. playing pitches) are extremely limited. It is therefore necessary to seek to retain facilities in their current locations where they are of most value and accessible to the community being served (see also Sections 16.3.3, 16.3.4(x) and 16.6.3). It is anticipated that the Green Space Strategy will provide further clarity in relation to this issue but until such times as the Strategy is completed and subsequently implemented there will be a general presumption against proposals involving development of playing fields unless:

- The proposed development is ancillary to the use of the site as a playing field (e.g. new changing rooms) or caretakers accommodation and does not adversely affect the quantity or quality of pitches and their use.



- The proposed development only affects land which is incapable of forming a playing pitch (or part of one).
- The playing fields that would be lost as a result of the proposed development would be replaced by a playing field or fields of equivalent or better quantity and quality and in a suitable location.
- The proposed development is for an outdoor or indoor sports facility of sufficient benefit to the development of sport to outweigh the loss of the playing field.

10.2.11 Policy OSR11: Play Facilities

It is Council policy to support the provision of structured and unstructured play areas with appropriate equipment and facilities throughout the County and to ensure the needs of all age groups – children, teenagers, adults and older people- are facilitated in the public parks of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown.

“Ready Steady Play! A National Play Strategy” was published by the National Children’s Office in 2004. The principal aim of the National Play Strategy is to improve the quality of children’s lives through the provision of play opportunities.

The Council’s Play Policy was adopted in February 2003 and the resulting *“Provision of Playgrounds Programme”* has been successful with the development of 18 playgrounds at various locations throughout the County. The Green Space Strategy will dictate the provision and distribution of future playgrounds.

In line with the National Play Strategy provision should be made to include suitable play opportunities for all ages of the child population within new residential developments. Design details pertaining to areas of play shall be submitted as part of any relevant planning application to include a detailed specification of any playground to be provided. Play equipment details, safety surface specifications and proof that all equipment fulfils all British and EU safety standards are to be submitted. Post construction certification by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents will also be a requirement.

The Council will endeavour to ensure that all play facilities will be accessible to people of varying abilities, age and cultural backgrounds. The Council will have regard to changing demographics in how and where it provides for play. Multiple use games areas (MUGA) incorporating for example basketball and 5-a-side facilities will be considered in any calculation of the “Equipped Playspace” standards.

