

# Donabate Portrane Community Council

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Submission on the  
Donabate Urban Framework Plan

## **Foreword**

Many who live in Donabate acknowledge its beauty, uniqueness, charm, and desirability as a place both to live and raise a family. It has an abundance of local amenities including two excellent beaches, numerous golf courses and sporting facilities, and Newbridge Demesne.

The Donabate Peninsula has a strong, vibrant and engaged community, which is passionate about where they live and consider it absolutely essential that its future development is properly planned and managed. Donabate Portrane Community Council (“DPCC”) is an apolitical, independent, democratically elected body representing the peninsula since the 1940’s and has been a fearless and vocal advocator on behalf of the community, particularly on planning matters.

DPCC has insisted since the inception of this UFP consultation process that everyone in Donabate has a right to be consulted as part of it and has encouraged all here to exercise that right. We expect this process to be meaningful, and take due account of all legitimate needs and concerns raised in it.

We welcome the potential opportunity the UFP presents to try redress past planning mistakes and plan for our future through the UFP in a fashion that is both congruous and sympathetic to the character of our village and the needs of the community.

We are concerned that the proposed UFP footprint may provide obstacles for the sustainable delivery and integration of Corballis and Ballymastone lands.

Donabate is a village on a peninsula, this should be reflected in the type of development that is proposed for the village. We are opposed to any intensification of high density development within the curtilage of the UFP.

We will highlight and challenge anything that is not in keeping with that or falls far short of our community’s expectations.

## **Infrastructural deficits**

DPCC has consistently highlighted the chronic infrastructural deficits on the Donabate Peninsula that have plagued it for years. Examples include frequent electricity supply outages, a lack of a permanent Garda presence, mobile telephone and broadband shortcomings, and inadequate public transport. The last is a critical point in particular: excessive and high-density development is planned for the area which is largely premised on there being a railway station here.

That very piece of key infrastructure has suffered ongoing peak-time capacity constraints that we believe are insurmountable without significant and sustained investment. Successive governments have consistently baulked at doing this, and while further growth is inevitable along the line that’s premised on rail being a commuting *panacea*, the reality is that it is and will remain an inhospitable, arduous and overcrowded mode of transport that is inadequate for present needs and will fail abysmally without the meaningful investment referred to here.

Extending the DART north beyond its present halts is meaningless without the track space needed to run more trains through the city centre. If we are serious about providing a village centre for future needs, then those very needs should not be allowed grow to extents that are excessive or disproportionate to the size of the area or its realistic capability of meeting them.

In that regard, and in response to concerns raised from our community, we must affirm our position, as voted on and agreed by our committee earlier this year, that DPCC is implacably opposed to any part of the train station car park being used for development in whatever guise. The car park is an

essential part of our transport / park and ride infrastructure, and in the context of the proposed growth of our village, any loss of it will be highly detrimental to our community needs, and will be vigorously resisted.

## Key points of DPCC's submission

- 1) The Donabate Urban Framework Plan ("DUFPP") should define and utilise a pedestrian and cyclist network plan, and key street cross sections to ensure that they align with existing as-built roads and pedestrian/shared path alignments and safety to the fore.
- 2) The local access street network should accommodate built form outcomes provided that the revised road network provides suitable quality design outcomes to the satisfaction of the responsible planning authority.
- 3) A coordinated pedestrian/cycle network should be implemented to integrate with a bus and rail network.
- 4) There needs to be careful sequencing to ensure a logical integration of appropriate development to bus and rail network services.
- 5) The DUFPP should reference Irish Rail development plans which sets out the future investments for a fast, high-capacity rail network to Dublin City and its suburbs. The DUFPP should also include a trigger for a document review to respond to the infrastructure required for the introduction of metro rail service between Lissenhall and Donabate, and the long overdue extension of the DART system north of Malahide.
- 6) The upgrade of the Hearse Road is paramount to the needs of the community and should take place in conjunction with the delivery of the UFP process.
- 7) Bus access to the train station should be segregated from general traffic.
- 8) The DUFPP should also accommodate future plans and development of a bus interchange / terminus. A suitable site would be what's commonly referred to as the Old Educate Together site as HGVs regularly use the roundabout at this location to turn their vehicles around.
- 9) High quality public open space with managed playgrounds and large open spaces that accommodate seasonal celebrations and local festivals that are central to the urban framework plan to promote and support local businesses. COVID 19 reminded us the importance of public open space. Rather than achieving minimum requirements of 10%, we should be exceeding this target. The UFP should explicitly prohibit the practise of allowing developers to pay "cash-in-lieu" for the under provision of public open space. We should actually set requirements of a minimum of 25% public open space.
- 10) Whilst the Cycling Corridors are yet to be determined, any future designs should avoid cycling environments in Donabate specifically, but throughout newly developed areas generally.
- 11) Support a proposed range of diverse retail and entertainment offerings in Donabate that is supported by quality landscaping and al-fresco dining. A great location is in and around Smiths pub and car park where we have a perfect example of the craftsmanship of Irish traditional stone buildings (with preservation order). This area, adjacent to the Donabate train station would provide a warm welcome and focal point to tourists and residents alike.

- 12) The DUFF appropriately caters for future drainage infrastructure requirements.
- 13) Design buildings to enhance the appearance and amenity of the Donabate, and to contribute to its street life and activity. Design buildings of an appropriate scale and form to the streetscape context and with well-considered architectural detail. Vary the height of new buildings across the study area so that a lower scale of development is maintained within the Donabate. In designing taller buildings (not exceeding four stories), consider the 'silhouette' of the building, i.e. the form of the building and its roof when viewed from all angles. The silhouette of a new building must complement existing adjoining buildings. Provide visual interest through variations in the form, setbacks and massing of new buildings. Ensure that new buildings do not create a sense of visual bulk or amenity issues such as overshadowing. In the commercial parts of the centre, create a more cohesive streetscape image with buildings of a consistent street wall height. Provide frontage setbacks in retail units for al-fresco dining. New buildings must provide a transitional height where adjoining residential properties to minimise overshadowing and overlooking, and reduce the visibility of upper levels. Buildings should be set back from the adjoining residential boundary
- 14) Incorporate environmentally sustainable design techniques in the design of new development or alterations to existing buildings.
- 15) Retain and enhance buildings that are of identified heritage significance.
- 16) Careful consideration for exterior building renders - glass, brick, stone, etc., to protect and enhance the character of the village. No drip edges that lead to discoloration and staining of exterior finishes. All gutters and drainpipes should be built into the design of roofs and walls.
- 17) Encourage retention of other older buildings which contribute to the overall character of Donabate, where they are in good condition and where this is a practical design solution.
- 18) Use available commercial land within the centre more efficiently so that opportunities for local businesses are created.
- 19) Ensure that the character and amenity of existing residential areas is maintained.
- 20) All new developments should accommodate appropriate underground parking.
- 21) Street parking should be kept to a minimum – disabled car parking for example.
- 22) Existing parking on the main street should be reconfigured to protect the safety of all road users. For example, parallel parking only in limited circumstances.
- 23) Adequate provision should be made for civic, Garda, and community medical facilities. We believe a town of Donabate's proposed size will require a permanent Garda presence and medical facilities like D-DOC. Adequate provision must be made for these in the DUFF.

24) Donabate has residents who are visually impaired and disabled. We trust that the needs of these and all of our most vulnerable are comprehended in this process.

25) Provision of space for a digital hub and offices for indigenous small and start up businesses. In light of COVID 19, these services are vital for sustaining the economy.

Kind regards,

David Fletcher

Chairman

Donabate Portrane Community Council