

Uimhir Thagarta Uathúil: SD-C195-251

Údar: Cllr Trevor Gilligan PC

Stádas: Submitted

Submission:

Saggart Village Residents Association (SVRA) has reviewed the SDCC Development Plan Draft and below note our observations.

In February 2021, we started work on creating our vision for Saggart with the establishment of a planning committee with members from

Comhairliúchán:

Draft South Dublin County Development Plan 2022 - 2028

Litir Chumhdaigh

Saggart Village Residents Association (SVRA) has reviewed the SDCC Development Plan Draft and below note our observations. In February 2021, we started work on creating our vision for Saggart with the establishment of a planning committee with members from all areas of Saggart. We communicated this vision with our councillors and TDs in advance of their review and vote on the draft plan. Since July, we have been reviewing the plan through that lens. This submission focuses on presenting what SVRA feels are the important matters which have been or yet need to be considered in SDCC's County Development Plan (2022 – 2028).

Observations:

Chapter 12: Our Neighbourhoods

Caibidil: Volume 1: Written Statement » Chapter 12: Our Neighbourhoods

Cllr Trevor Gilligan PC

Saggart Village Resident Association (SVRA)'s vision for Saggart is:

A thriving village with a unique heritage, a diverse community and a bright future, providing the right balance between social and commercial needs in a tidy-town environment where people can meet, relax and enjoy community activities within its shared spaces.

The objectives we feel are important to secure that vision are:

1. A Local Area Plan that represents Saggart
2. An area that includes 'green space'
3. Improved road infrastructure
4. A village which protects and promotes its rich heritage

5. A village with sufficient community spaces and leisure facilities reflective of the needs of the community

Wording of the Development Plan

We welcome that Chapter 5 recognises “each of the villages has a unique character and offers a diverse range of professional and retail services.” We would recommend, however, that Saggart be recognised as a unique village in the wording that is used throughout the development plan and not to be incorporated into a merged town of Saggart / Citywest. The below quote from p.11 Chapter makes reference to Saggart and Citywest as an “emerging town”. This is very worrying terminology. Saggart should be actively supported to remain a “village”, to be protected as a village and not to be referenced in the plan as a town of Saggart / Citywest.

“The new district at Fortunestown near the emerging town of Saggart/Citywest is identified for residential growth.”

A Local Area Plan that represents Saggart (SVRA Objective 1)

The Plan notes: Under the CSO, Newcastle, Rathcoole, Saggart and Brittas are identified settlements outside Dublin City and Suburbs but their settlement type is not identified within the RSES, this being left to the Development Plan. Saggart is included in the Fortunestown Local Area Plan; however as a village it pales in size compared to the sprawling spread, density and population of Citywest. It was recognised that Saggart would benefit from being included in the Clondalkin Local Electoral Area due to its size and needs being similar to those of Rathcoole, Newcastle and Brittas; this change was made. Saggart and Citywest are separated along constituency lines and do not have the same councillors representing both. This can run the risk of lack of joined up thinking, can leave room for miscommunication and does not ensure that those councillors reviewing and advocating for plans for Citywest are always considering the impact on Saggart and vice versa.

We request consideration that the Development Plan addresses this issue. We suggest Saggart should be linked with Rathcoole, Newcastle and Brittas and have a Local Area Plan created for these similar villages, separate to the Fortunestown Local Area Plan. We feel this is necessary to ensure that Saggart is not overdeveloped.

It is noted in the Plan that Saggart’s housing stock increased by 51% between 2011 and 2016 because of reduced vacancy. The Plan also notes that the Saggart settlement had a population in 2016 of 3,133 which is targeted to grow by 366 persons (11%) to 3,499 persons by 2028. We feel these figures are under estimated and that the population growth to 3499 projected for 2028 has already been reached. The 2020 census was delayed to 2021 due to Covid. We expect a significant further increase in development from 2016-2020 will be shown in the next census.

We support the recognition in chapter 7 of the plan that the capacity of zoned lands is considered to be sufficient. We query whether the zoned lands already approved have been underestimated also.

A site on the Boherboy Road was granted permission in 2021 with no recommendations made to infrastructure in Saggart. This we feel is an example of potential zoned lands already being overprescribed if infrastructure is not improved.

An area that includes ‘green space’ (SVRA Objective 2)

We welcome the commitment in the Development Plan GI7 SLO 1: The current green wildlife corridor between Saggart and Rathcoole be maintained and the need to preserve this wildlife corridor be incorporated into the design and development plans for Rathcoole park.

We welcome plans for the enhancement of the L7 corridor to attempt to link green spaces from Citywest to Rathcoole in a coherent fashion.

The Plan claims to adopt a proactive approach to the preservation and enhancement of biodiversity in South Dublin County by protecting existing and restoring degraded habitats in the county in order to:

- Mitigate climate change impacts by absorbing excess flood water
- Limit atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations

We welcome Objective 3: To promote and protect native riparian vegetation along all watercourses... and Objective 4: To uncover existing culverts where appropriate and in accordance with relevant river catchment proposals to restore the watercourse to acceptable ecological standards for biodiversity.

Saggart, like Rathcoole and Corkagh Demesne, needs to benefit from these projects. The ecosystems already exist, they need funding for their restoration and maintenance. There are multiple tributaries of the River Camac flowing through Saggart. These should be providing storage areas for flood water but many have become blocked, and their Riparian Corridors been uprooted. Areas of Saggart have experienced flooding possibly as a result of this. If cleared, the natural vegetation will protect the banks from erosion and provide storage areas for flood water as well as food and habitat for wildlife.

We request an SLO to allocate sufficient funding to complete a flood risk assessment for Saggart and to fund the recommendations of this assessment towards restoring and protecting existing biodiversity, ecosystems and drain systems.

Improved road infrastructure (SVRA Objective 3)

Chapter 12 Pg. 7 recognises that it is important “these areas develop at an incremental pace, based on the delivery of social, physical and transport infrastructure and services”.

Saggart was identified as the fastest growing town in Ireland in the 2016 Census, with Rathcoole second fastest. Yet the road infrastructure in Saggart has not responded to this development. The roads have not changed, with the village crossroads remaining the sole access route. The effects of this are a congested village at rush hour traffic in pre Covid times, which can be expected to return post Covid.

The Plan in SM6 SLO 1 promises to investigate the need to carry out a traffic and transport study for Rathcoole, Saggart and Newcastle and the surrounding areas following the publication of the GDA Strategy review to 2042 which will clarify the context within which the road network in the area will function and to include a review of HGV movement.

We would state that there is definitely a need and this SLO should be changed to “Commit to carry out a traffic and transport study”

We request an SLO be added to undertake a traffic management strategy for Saggart as has been identified as an SLO for Lucan:

SM6 SLO 2: To undertake a traffic management strategy for Lucan Village, to assess traffic management options, including measures to improve the cycling and pedestrian environment and to examine the potential for off-street parking.

We suggest a new SLO be added to the plan to improve the safety of the road for pedestrians between Millbrook Nursing Home and Saggart Village. There is currently no footpath on Castle Road beyond Drury Mills. This is a barrier for residents accessing community facilities on foot and a safety issue.

Western Dublin Orbital Route New road from N81 to the Leixlip Interchange. New road from N81 to the Link between the N81, N7 and the N4 with a route Leixlip Interchange by-pass function around Rathcoole and Saggart. We note the plan will assess the need for this. We strongly advocate for this orbital route as the existing road infrastructure is not suitable for the existing and planned level of housing for Saggart and surrounding areas. An additional bypass road is essential to remedy the ever increasing congestion experienced in and around Saggart. This road had been identified in 2006 by SDCC as being potentially necessary – significant development has occurred in the 15 years since.

Due to a poor public transport network or safe alternatives, car use in Saggart and surrounding areas remains high; the Luas connects Saggart residents to a particular route only, the No.69 bus route connects residents to a particular route only, there are many parts of Dublin inaccessible to Saggart by public transport. We stress that additional and increased public transport infrastructure is required and should be listed as an SLO in the Development Plan

There are no cycle lanes in the village or surrounding roads. Children cycling to school must do so on single lane roads or on footpaths. The village has recently been upgraded with wider footpaths along garter lane, which are welcomed, however these stop short at the medical centre and the tyre centre. Pedestrians must then continue onto narrow footpaths. We believe that more accessible walks and cycle ways that connect the areas of Saggart together would be of benefit.

We welcome the Plan noting several commitments to review cycling facilities and cycling linkages within and around Saggart. Connecting the green areas from Citywest to Saggart and on to Rathcoole would be excellent for residents from the perspective of positive impacts on health as well as providing opportunities from the promotion of our rich heritage.

We note also the plan commits to identifying a site for the appropriate location of a new post primary school within the Neighbourhood Area of Citywest/Saggart/Rathcoole/Newcastle. As per our above comments, impact on existing infrastructure / traffic must be considered when assessing location of a much needed post primary school.

A village which protects and promotes its rich heritage (SVRA Objective 4)

A historical County Dublin gem of national importance, Saggart owes its name to the monk Mosacra who founded a monastery near the village in the 7th century. Teach Sacra 'house of Sacra' later became Teach Sagard or Saggart in English. The remains of the original monastery are still to be found near the village today.

Saggart is now designated as a National Monument Zone. It also has at least 14 National Monuments as recorded by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland. These include the pair of megalithic standing stones, which are affectionately known locally as Adam and Eve. The Raheen Standing Stone (a megalithic standing stone) can also be found nearby on the Blessington Road. There are also four pre-Norman monuments in the village, which include two high crosses, a cross slab and a cross base.

Saggart has the historic Swiftbrook Paper Mill, which supplied the paper mill, which produced the paper that the 1916 Proclamation was printed on. The original home of Dean Swift is located within metres of the village crossroads alongside another historic mill pond.

One of the walkways in Rathcoole which is mentioned in the Development Plan

"GI7 Objective 4: To develop Rathcoole Woodlands as part of a wider nature/ walking trail from Saggart to Lugg Woods subject to the protection of its biodiversity, wildlife and ecological value which is of primary importance."

is in fact the path the papermill workers living in Rathcoole walked twice daily on their route to and from work. This could be a very welcome link between different sections of the development plan i.e. Green Infrastructure, as well as Natural, Cultural and Built Heritage.

We feel this Development Plan makes strong commitments to promote heritage and tourism in the area and in creative ways which include the below commitments. We would welcome the opportunity to work with SDCC and other stakeholders to achieve these goals:

EDE20 Objective 2: To support the development of local tourist and heritage trails at suitable locations ... and seek to make such trails interactive through the use of sensitive signage and the further development of mobile application software

EDE22 SLO 1: To develop the tourism potential of Saggart: Swift Brook Mill.

NCBH20 SLO 2: To investigate Saggart Village being designated an Architectural Conservation Area

A village, with sufficient community spaces and leisure facilities, reflective of the needs of the community (SVRA Objective 5)

Our vision for Saggart includes that of a coherent village centre that can facilitate the growing population and the creation of a community within Saggart. Saggart currently has two community facilities, Saggart Arts & Heritage Centre and St Mary's GAA Club. The new community centre purchased by SDCC and expected to open in 2022 will be a fantastic addition to these. The village plaza was a welcome addition as an open community space.

As the fastest growing town in the last two censuses, we suggest there is still a need for exploring additional outdoor community spaces and other facilities. It is important that opportunities to expand on this space are explored and that use of the space is maximised and promoted. We would welcome the inclusion of an SLO to provide additional outdoor facilities for residents in Saggart (e.g. a playground for children, additional furniture for the village centre and well lit up public spaces, a running track)

In addition, we note and welcome CS8 Objective 2: *To support well-designed infill development along the main street and core village area of Saggart.* However Saggart village has been left with a vacant site for many years which will continue to make that objective difficult to achieve. This is a prime location along the main street and we request support from SDCC to have this space be well designed and put to use.

We also welcome the Plan's commitment *to support the delivery of a new library service in the Rathcoole environs, to meet the needs of the expanding population.*

Conclusion

Overall we feel the plan sets out many clear objectives which we recognise will have a positive on Saggart. We hope, where we have made observations for additional elements to be included in the plan, or have changes made to the wording, that these be taken into consideration in the final plan. We welcome the opportunity to support SDCC and other stakeholders in working towards the implementation of the objectives of the South Dublin County Development Plan over the coming years. We look forward to seeing the positive things to come, which will build on the great community Saggart already is.

Documents Attached: Níl

Teorainneacha Gafa ar an léarscáil: Níl