



## IRISH PLANNING INSTITUTE

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13 March 2020

### **Reference: Places for People, National Policy on Architecture**

A Chara,

The Irish Planning Institute welcomes the opportunity to contribute to a new National Policy on Architecture that will underpin and support a high quality, low carbon and more resilient built environment for future generations. This submission will present comments of the Institute in four sections:

- Designing for Climate Resilience and Sustainability;
- Designing Quality Places for Public Benefit;
- Respecting Our Past, Shaping Our Future; and
- Leadership.

#### **Designing for Climate Resilience and Sustainability**

- An evaluation of the location, accessibility and connectivity of buildings is pivotal in building climate resilience and in the promotion of sustainable development. It is considered that the availability of public transport, mixed-use development and good pedestrian and cycle connectivity, with a focus on the implementation of a smart mobility strategy, is equal in importance to the energy efficiency of individual buildings in emissions reduction. Addressing the existing and increasing Co2 emissions of the Irish transport sector is challenging. The development concept 'transport-orientated development' (TOD), which optimises *inter alia* the provision of housing, employment, public services and leisure space in proximity to public transport nodes must be the dynamic underpinning to new building construction and regeneration.
- Furthermore, new buildings have a role to play as energy producers with a vision to support net contributors to the grid. It is recommended that the principle of subsidiarity should be invoked in energy production utilising the individual building as a principal unit of energy production.

#### **Designing Quality Places for Public Benefit**

- In achieving quality places experience informs us that an area-based approach to development is a more successful methodology than incrementalist development on a site by site basis. Place making requires strategic vision, developing that vision with stakeholders through the plan making process and effectively communicating the vision to a broader audience through urban design schemes. Plan making itself must be inter-disciplinary, requiring a broad church of expertise beginning with landscape analysis/morphology. The rule of thumb is the quality of plan inputs will determine the quality of the plan and ultimately, the quality of life for residents, workers and visitors. Furthermore, plan

implementation requires integrated multi-disciplinary teams of planners, architects, other built environment professionals and specialist expertise.

#### **Respecting Our Past, Shaping Our Future**

- It is integral in the plan making process of survey, analysis and plan that context is understood, valued and interrogated. It is recognised that good places are authentic in character and that conservation, landscape and building protection are part of the development dynamic. The authenticity of place can be achieved in plan making by adapting, repairing, renewing and promoting elements of place balancing character with the requirements for new homes, businesses, leisure and community infrastructure while reducing carbon emissions. In achieving the objective of respecting our past while shaping our future the input of existing residents, communities, NGO's and other interested parties in plan making is pivotal in balancing development and conservation goals.

#### **Leadership**

- The formulation of a vision, the adoption of a plan and the agreement and support of all stakeholders may be insufficient in itself to achieve good place making, climate resilience and sustainable development. In instances, the implementation may not be achievable without dedicated charismatic leadership. In this regard, Westport and Clonakilty are cited as examples of town regeneration where renewal has been led from the front by built environment professionals discharging dedicated roles.
- Furthermore, there is an opportunity to look at the regional tier to provide access to specialist planners and architects comprising *inter alia* place making and urban design skills, which would be available to local authorities on a rotating basis as a resource that would provide leadership and expertise in planning making and urban renewal.

The Institute considers that these recommendations would make a significant difference to the quality of the built environment as part of the implementation and delivery of the new National Policy on Architecture.

Yours sincerely,



#### **Conor Norton MIPI**

#### **President 2020 - 2021**

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