The City Edge Strategic Framework

Report to South Dublin Council for Noting – 09.05.22

Purpose of this report

The purpose of this report is –

- To provide a brief outline of the City Edge Strategic Framework
- To explain the next steps in the process of planning for the regeneration of the area.

The City Edge Strategic Framework is being presented to Members for noting.

Background

The City Edge Project is a joint initiative between South Dublin County Council and Dublin City Council to create a new liveable, sustainable and climate resilient urban quarter at the western edge of the City. The project area covers 700 hectares within the Naas Road, Ballymount and Park West areas and has the potential for 40,000 new homes and 75,000 jobs making it one of the largest regeneration schemes in Europe.

This area is identified in the National Planning Framework (NPF) as a part of Dublin that is currently underutilised and has the potential to achieve Government policy in terms of compact growth, at scale. The City Edge area is strategically positioned to become an attractive urban extension of the city, where people will be able to live, work, and socialise. Regeneration of the area will support the delivery of new homes, help Dublin become a climate resilient City, accommodate the next generation of employment and provide liveable spaces that connect seamlessly with the surrounding neighbourhoods.

Strategic Framework Purpose

The City Edge Strategic Framework is a non-statutory plan that sets out a high-level strategy for the regeneration of the City Edge area. The Framework will be followed by a more comprehensive Statutory Plan which will guide development at a finer level of detail.

The purpose of the Strategic Framework is:
- To set out a high-level strategy for the regeneration of the City Edge area including an overarching vision and strategic objectives;
- To plan for the delivery of strategic infrastructure including streets, parks, public transport and utilities;
- To outline a series of priority actions in the areas of legislation, policy, funding and infrastructure to facilitate the future development of the City Edge area;
- To seek the support of government departments and state agencies including alignment of relevant policies and programmes and allocation of funding in order to deliver the City Edge vision;

- To provide a context for the preparation of a statutory local area plan to provide more detailed guidance for the future development of the area.

Document Structure

The Strategic Framework is divided into 12 Chapters as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction
Chapter 1 sets out the background to the project.

Chapter 2: The Site Today
Chapter 2 comprises a description of the characteristics of the area as it is currently, reflecting the comprehensive baseline analysis carried out.

Chapter 3: The Vision
This chapter presents the overarching vision and strategic objectives for the regeneration of the area.

Chapter 4: The Spatial Framework
Chapter 4 lays out the strategic context for regeneration and the core components of the spatial framework including –
- Camac River Re-naturalisation
- Enhancement of the Grand Canal
- Introducing and enhancing green and blue space
- Creating a Greenway from Tymon Park to Phoenix Park
- Undergrounding overhead electricity lines
- Setting out a street network and a cycle network
- A new Luas Station on the Naas Road
- A new railway interchange at Kylemore
- Introducing orbital connectivity
- Expanding the sewer network, and
- Setting out land-uses, centres and nodes.

Chapter 5: Housing
Chapter 5 sets out the housing strategy for City Edge which aims to foster vibrant, balanced and sustainable residential communities offering a diverse choice of high-quality homes and tenures while ensuring that residential development is of an appropriate scale.

Chapter 6: Community, Culture and Arts
This chapter presents a strategy which aims to provide Community, Cultural and Arts (CCA) infrastructure from the outset, to catalyse communities and support their growth, to connect key community buildings, and to nurture CCA to help formulate the evolving identities of places and neighbourhoods within City Edge.

Chapter 7: Economy
Chapter 7 comprises a strategy for the economy of the City Edge area to create a resilient and diverse employment offer that is underpinned by high value employment opportunities within a re-imagined and re-purposed economy. The economic regeneration of City Edge will also incorporate a gradual transition towards urban industry and innovation.

Chapter 8: Movement
The Movement Framework supports the creation of a new urban quarter focussed on active travel and public transport. It capitalises on City Edge's location and transport infrastructure, whilst recognising the need for investment to improve public transport, green infrastructure and enhance permeability.

Chapter 9: Natural Infrastructure
The natural infrastructure strategy proposes a 50% green cover target including enhancement of two existing parks; creation of two new parks; provision of smaller community parks; and greenways and blueways. Greening will also be provided by street tree canopies; greening on private plots; and green roofs and walls.

Chapter 10: Utilities
The strategy is to provide resilient and sustainable utilities, including foul sewers, potable water, surface water, energy, and electricity. This vision considers a green society and circular economy adaptable to new technologies in order to reduce carbon footprint; and the staging of the utilities to service the regeneration of the City Edge area over time. However, there are significant utility constraints that will need to be addressed to enable delivery of the vision.

Chapter 11: Districts and Character Areas
This chapter sets out a high-level strategy for the type of development envisioned for the area including guidance covering –
- Height and density
- Land-use
- Street typologies
- Block typologies
- Community parks provision.

The strategic framework area is divided into five districts –
- Kylemore
- Greenhills
- Naas Road
- Red Cow and
- Cherry Orchard.

The scale of these districts facilitates delivery of a self-contained development outcome. Defining elements of the districts include land use, centres and high streets, the movement network and natural infrastructure. Indicative layouts are presented for each area.

Chapter 12: Delivery

This Chapter sets out the key challenges and opportunities of City Edge, and approaches to how regeneration could be delivered. It sets out a strategy for how growth could occur over time including where development may happen; the sequencing of strategic infrastructure; planning policy requirements; economic viability issues; how delivery will be funded; and governance options; and identifies 23 priority actions required to progress the regeneration of City Edge.

Public Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

Intensive engagement with stakeholders has taken place as part of the preparing the Strategic Framework including a four-week public consultation period from 9th September to 6th October 2021; international conference events; live online public presentations; creation and launch of dedicated City Edge website: The City Edge Project | A Transformative Initiative for Dublin City; and a Facebook, Instagram and Twitter campaign.

A summary of the public consultation process including the issues raised in the submissions received and the response of the Chief Executives of SDCC and DCC is contained in the Chief Executive's Report on Submissions Received, available at the following link: Chief Executive's Report on Submissions Received - The City Edge Project (this report was already presented to Members for noting at the Council meeting in December 2021).

Engagement has continued during the preparation of the Strategic Framework including meetings with state agencies and other stakeholders including:

- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH)
- Land Development Agency (LDA)
- National Transport Authority (NTA)
- Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII)
- Irish Water (IW)
- Waterways Ireland
- ESB Networks
- Eirgrid
- Iarnrod Eireann
- Coras Iompair Eireann (CIE)
- Health and Safety Authority
- Housing Infrastructure Services Company (HISCo)
- Irish Business and Employers' Confederation (IBEC)
- Technological University Dublin (TUD).

Comprehensive public consultation will form a central part of the Statutory Plan preparation process during the next stage of the City Edge project. This will include further engagement with the local community, businesses and landowners living and working within and around the City Edge Project boundary to ensure their views on the project are taken into account. Meetings have also been held with many landowners within the City Edge area and this liaison will continue during the next stage of the project. Continued engagement is being encouraged through the use of the Cityedge.ie dedicated website.

Accompanying Reports

The final Strategic Framework is accompanied by a series of reports that have helped informed the document, these reports will be publicly available, and include:

- Baseline study
- Economic Strategy
- Housing Analysis
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
- Surface Water Management Plan
- Climate Action Plan
- Seveso Constraints Study.

Environmental Screening

A Stage 1 Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening has been carried out. It has been determined that the Strategic Framework is likely, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, to have a significant effect on European Sites. A Stage 1 Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening (SEA) has also been carried out. It has been determined that the Strategic Framework falls within the remit of the SEA Directive / SEA Regulations.

In the context that the non-statutory Strategic Framework will inform a Statutory Plan at the next stage of the City Edge Project, the SEA and AA processes will recommence in parallel with the preparation of the Statutory Plan and the need for mandatory SEA and a Stage II AA Natura Impact Report will be further determined.

Next Steps

As set out above, Chapter 12 'Delivery' identifies a series of priority actions, covering elements that need to be in place for delivery of the City Edge vision covering areas including legislation, policy, funding and infrastructure. Below are some of the priority actions identified.

Variations and Statutory Plan
The first action to be progressed is the carrying out of variations to the SDCC and DCC Development Plans. In the case of SDCC, the purpose of the variation will be to provide a statutory footing for assessment of planning applications. The variation of the DCC Development Plan will be required to address land use zoning changes to align with City Edge aspirations. The process of variations and statutory plan preparation will commence immediately following the noting of the City Edge Strategic Framework by South Dublin County and Dublin City Councils. Following these variations both Council's the intention is to progress either a more detailed Local Area Plan or Urban Development Zone. This will need to be kept under review.

Legislation and Guidance
Engagement is required with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage regarding bringing forward legislation providing for urban development zones and land value sharing; and the review of current planning policy guidance on apartments and building height; both with a view to facilitating the City Edge regeneration project.

HNDA and RSES

The possibility for the preparation of a single Housing Needs Demand Assessment (HNDA) for the City Edge area needs to be explored; and engagement with the Eastern and Midland Regional Authority regarding alignment of RSES housing figures with City Edge aspirations is required.

Transport and Utilities Infrastructure

There are a series of priority actions relating to infrastructure requirements including upgrade of the 9B sewer and a programme of local interventions to free up foul network capacity in the short term; progressing the Naas Road Luas stop and Kylemore rail station; and initiating a feasibility study for the undergrounding of overhead electricity lines. Engagement with the NTA regarding active travel, BusConnects and facilitating the Inner Orbital public transport route is also required. Carrying out energy studies including engagement with Codema and progressing risk contour mapping for the lower tier Seveso sites are further actions to be pursued in the short term.

Natural Infrastructure

Progressing the Camac Flood Alleviation Scheme, carrying out a feasibility study for the first park within City Edge and devising a strategy for provision of community parks are actions to be pursued to ensure delivery of natural infrastructure.

State Supports and Funding

The possibility of State support for land assembly and business relocation needs to be explored, while an analysis of potential infrastructure funding and financing mechanisms has been identified as essential to ensure delivery of the required infrastructure.

Stakeholder Engagement and Governance

Finally, preparation of a stakeholder engagement programme for the next stage of the City Edge planning process, and preparation of a governance strategy with a full options analysis are critical for ensuring buy-in and delivery, respectively, of the City Edge vision.

Pursuing the actions set out above will build the confidence and the certainty required to attract both public and private investment and will ultimately ensure the delivery of this new urban quarter.

Conclusion

This Strategic Framework sets out a strong and compelling blueprint for regeneration of this area over the coming decades. A key role of the Framework is to build confidence in the process of placemaking over time that will in turn attract investment and act as a catalyst for further development. City Edge is a unique opportunity to achieve Government policies of compact growth, transport-oriented development and climate resilience, at scale, and a chance to make a significant contribution to resolving the housing crisis while also generating substantial employment opportunities.