

Cork City Council
Comhairle Cathrach Chorcaí



BLACKROCK VILLAGE AREA ACTION PLAN



APRIL 2006

PLANNING POLICY SECTION

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

NAVIGATION HOUSE, ALBERT QUAY, CORK

www.corkcity.ie

e:planning@corkcity.ie

TEL:021-492-4086



Blackrock Village Area Action Plan
Core area

Foreword

This Area Action Plan has been prepared to provide a strategy for improving the centre of Blackrock village. The City Council believe that now is the right time to undertake the improvement of the village for a variety of reasons. The village has tremendous potential given its existing assets, including its location fronting onto the River Lee and at the centre of surrounding residential areas, and its role as the physical, social and services focus for the surrounding village. The redevelopment of the former Ursuline Convent site also presents the opportunity to create a new Blackrock Public Park.

The City Council commissioned consultants to prepare a strategy for the improvement of the village in 2004. The outcome of this was the *Blackrock Village and Harbour Study* (BVHS) prepared by O' Mahony Pike Architects. This area action plan has been prepared to deliver the key concepts contained in the study prepared, taking the ideas and developing them into a formal framework that can be implemented by the City Council and its partners in the community and development sectors.

With the adoption of the Area Action Plan in April 2006 the City Council agreed a strategy for the improvement of Blackrock Village. This followed a full public consultation process, with the final plan being amended to reflect the aspirations of the community, preserving and enhancing the village and its setting.

This plan is a non-statutory "corporate plan" and its purpose is to amplify the objectives set out in the *Cork City Development Plan 2004*, and to identify specific actions with targets and responsibilities for delivery have been identified within the plan for the delivery of improvement. Key projects include:

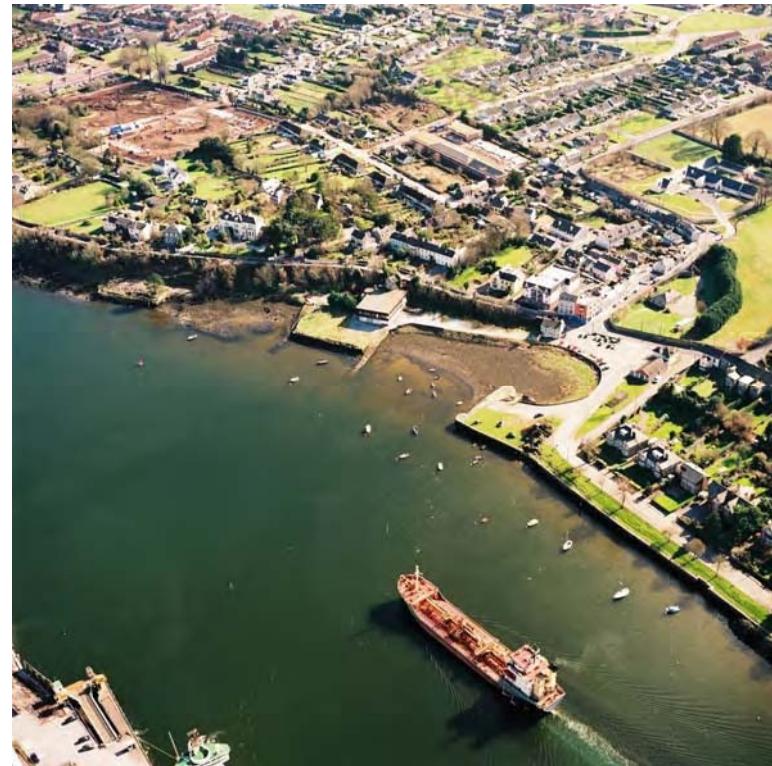
- **Blackrock Harbour** - the improvement of the harbour and its setting and the and development of adjacent sites capable of providing much-needed local services, such as shops and cafes;
- **Blackrock Park** - a new public park for the village to the front of the former Ursuline building;
- **Blackrock Harbour to Blackrock Castle Walkway** - along the edge of the water forming part of the Banks of the Lee walkway.

These will be delivered in the next few years and will be a credit to the village and the city as a whole, putting Blackrock on the map and giving it the quality of environment that it deserves. Thank you for helping to shape the future of Blackrock.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Joe Gavin', written in a cursive style.

BY MR JOE GAVIN, CITY MANAGER



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document was prepared by the Planning Policy Section of the Planning and Development Department.

Project Team

The project team responsible for preparing the plan included:

- Karen O'Mahony (Executive Planner)
- Maire Harrington (Executive Technician)
- Michelle O'Flynn (Assistant Staff Officer)
- Jeremy Ward (Senior Executive Planner)

The Planning Policy Section would also like to thank the following people who made an invaluable contribution to the development of the *Blackrock Village Area Action Plan*:

- Members of Cork City Council, particularly those from the South-East ward;
- The members of the Blackrock Village Area Action Plan Working Group / Implementation Team;
- Blackrock Community Association; and
- Those who made submissions on the Draft Blackrock Village Area Action Plan. These contributors are listed in Appendix One of the Plan.

The **Blackrock Village Area Action Plan Working Group** included the following contributors

Chair:

Jim O'Donovan (Director of Services, Planning and Development)

Planning and Development:

The Project Team (see opposite)
Ann Bogan (Senior Planner, Planning Policy)
Pat Ruane (Conservation Officer)
Ronnie McDowell (Senior Planner, Development Control)

Recreation and Amenity:

Stephen Scully (Administrative Officer)
Liam Casey (Senior Executive Parks Superintendent)

Roads and Transportation:

Pat Casey (Senior Engineer, Traffic)
Tony Fleming (Senior Engineer, Roads Design)

Additional contributions were made by:

Corporate Affairs

Alison O'Rourke (Administrative Officer, Property)
Edith Roberts (A/Senior Executive Estates Officer, Property)

Environment

Anne Hennessy (Senior Executive Engineer, Drainage)

Law

Deborah Hegarty (Law Agent)

Planning & Development

Brigh Ryan (Assistant Planner)
Denis McGarry (Senior Executive Technician)
Ronan Leydon (Temporary Clerical Officer)

Roads and Transportation

Noel Tummon (Senior Executive Engineer, Traffic)



Introduction

Cork City Council recognises the tremendous potential of Blackrock Village to be an asset to the city. The Plan aims to make Blackrock Village a focus for Blackrock and the wider Mahon peninsular area, and an intrinsically attractive place that is a “pearl” along the waterfront extending from the Lee Fields to Blackrock Castle via the City Centre, with opportunities for active and passive recreation. Excluding the cost of repairing the quay walls and implementing the riverside walkway, the implementation of this Plan will require investment in the region of €3 million. The public investment will complement private sector investment in the area.

Plan aim

To promote the regeneration of the centre of Blackrock Village through the development and improvement of Blackrock Harbour and new Blackrock Park as a focal point for the centre of the village.

Plan Structure

The Blackrock Village Area Action Plan is set out as follows:

Section 1: **Introduction** which sets out the background to the plan;
 Section 2: **Village Design Strategy** which outlines how the village should be developed and improved through the public realm strategy, movement and accessibility strategy and development strategy;
 Section 3: **Implementation Strategy** which identifies how, when and by whom the various elements of the strategy will be delivered.

The Blackrock Village Area

The primary focus of the Action Plan is the Blackrock Village area extending from the former Ursuline Convent building to the River Lee, taking in the convent grounds, village core and the Harbour. However, a wider area is also considered in so far as it relates to two specific projects, the implementation of the Blackrock Harbour / Blackrock Castle walkway and the provision of car parking on the Marina.

Blackrock is an established suburb to the south-east of the City Centre. It evolved in the 19th century around a traditional fishing village on the southern banks of the River Lee and has accommodated an imposing Convent Building adjacent to the village core since the early 18th century. The village nucleus still retains its simple street pattern and modest fine grained urban form.

It contains a significant number of protected structures of local, regional and national importance. The urban structure, however, is quite disjointed and does not integrate the three principal elements of the settlement; (1) Blackrock Harbour/River Lee; (2) the village core and (3) the Ursuline Convent and lands.

Background

The City Council commissioned a number of detailed studies to inform the development and improvement of the village. These included:

- A Study to investigate the reconfiguration of Blackrock Harbour (undertaken by Cunnane Stratton Reynolds) in 1998.
- A strategy for the development and improvement of Blackrock Village and harbour in 2003 (undertaken by O’ Mahony Pike Architects).

Permission was granted for the redevelopment of the Ursuline lands for residential purposes in March 2004. This proposal incorporated key design concepts outlined in a non-statutory development brief prepared by the Planning Department in 2002. This included securing the conservation of the Ursuline Convent and its setting and establishing stronger connections to the Village.

Project Process

The plan was prepared according to the following broad process.

Issues exploration & draft plan preparation - February 2005 to Sept 2005

Following a preliminary issues exploration and work by the Blackrock Village AAP Working Group, the draft plan was prepared by the Planning Policy Section of the Planning and Development Department.

Public consultation - October 2005 to March 2006

Extensive consultation with the public and many key stakeholders was held between October 2005 and March 2006, including two “Open Days” in the village.

Plan adoption - 10 April 2006

The Manager’s Report on submissions received was considered by the Planning and Development SPC and the Plan adopted by Cork City Council.

Next Step - Implementation

The Blackrock Village AAP Implementation Team was convened for the first time in December of 2005. This group is responsible for bringing forward the implementation of the projects outlined in the plan (see Section 3) according to the agreed timescales.

