City profile

Dublin

Geraint Ellis*
School of Environmental Planning, Queen’s University Belfast, David Keir Building, Stranmillis Rd, Belfast BT9 5AQ, UK

Jong Kim1
South Dublin County Council, Town Centre, Tallaght, Dublin 24, Ireland

The Republic of Ireland has witnessed dramatic economic growth in the last ten years, resulting in the major social, physical and cultural transformation of Dublin, its capital. This growth has outstripped the city’s ability to expand its infrastructure, so that Dublin now faces severe crises in transport and housing supply. A strong policy and institutional framework has now been put in place to address these shortcomings, although a number of key constraints remain. This profile describes a number of initiatives in key policy areas and highlights current debate concerning the institutional capacity to deliver major infrastructure programmes. © 2001 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

Introduction

In 1984, a City Profile of the capital of the Republic of Ireland, Dublin, portrayed it as having the characteristics of a declining industrial city (MacLaran, 1984). The intervening years have seen spectacular economic change in the Republic of Ireland, which has fuelled a revolution in Irish society and the urban landscape that supports it. This transformation is at its most extreme in Dublin, whose city-region is home to 40% of the country’s 3.6 million people. It therefore seems remarkable that less than twenty years ago Dublin could have been seen as a failing city; it is now a prime tourist destination and the heart of a buoyant national economy, straining under the weight of its own success and the pressure placed on its physical and social infrastructure.

This profile will not reiterate the historical evolution of Dublin described in ‘Dublin: City Profile’ (MacLaran, 1984; see also MacLaran, 1993), but will concentrate on recent aspects of the city’s experience, particularly focusing on the 1990s and the initiatives introduced to guarantee the long term economic and environmental viability of Dublin. The article will cover issues faced by the entire city region, known as the Greater Dublin Area (GDA, see Fig. 1), which has a total population in excess of 1.4 million. This area includes not only the commercial and urban core, but also the surrounding counties of Wicklow, Kildare and Meath, which are strongly influenced by the city and where commuting is particularly significant (Horner, 1994).

The profile first sets out some of the factors of economic and demographic change, followed by a discussion of the evolving administrative and policy context. The second half of the paper takes a more detailed look at some of the key policy challenges facing Dublin: housing, urban regeneration and transport.

Recent economic and demographic change

The last ten years have seen rapid growth in Ireland’s economy, with GDP per capita increasing by 6.3% 1990–2001 (OECD, 2001a), well in excess of all other OECD countries. Furthermore, between 1990 and 2000 unemployment dropped from 14% to only 4% (OECD, 2001b), far outstripping European averages (Barry, 1999), leading to a convergence of Irish living standards with European levels, which rose from 59% of EU15 in 1987 to 88% in 1997. This period has seen the Irish economy transformed from one based on agriculture and protectionist policy into an increasingly urban and industrially based economy, closely integrated with global markets. The causes of such phenomenal growth are complex, but include a fiscal stabilisation of the 1980s; a substantial injection of EU structural funds (amounting to 3% of GNP in the early 1990s, Fitzgerald, 1998); increased education and skill levels of the workforce; and until recently, relative wage moderation and peaceful labour relations (Barry, 1999).
Combined, these have provided a climate that has been extremely successful in attracting foreign owned ventures (particularly American based IT companies) and a major share in the expanding tourist market. Dublin is now one of the top tourist city destinations in Europe with over two million visitors annually, generating in excess of £400m a year. While this success has been witnessed across the country, Dublin’s urban primacy has ensured it has been central to economic expansion, contributing 33% more Gross Value Added per capita than the rest of the country (Central Statistics Office/Northern Ireland Research and Statistics Agency, 2000). This growth has had a major impact on the physical and social infrastructure of the city (e.g. see Killen and MacLaran, 1999) and as the economy has continued to expand, Dublin is experiencing mounting stress in a number of key sectors, including housing, transport and office space.

Table 1 illustrates some of the indicators of this growth in the GDA since 1991, including population. In common with many other European cities, inner city Dublin witnessed major employment and emigration from the 1960s onwards, resulting in severe physical decay and population decline. Horner (1999a) has analysed the changing demographic dynamic within the city region, showing how the urban population within 48 km of the city centre had doubled since 1936, while the inner city population has declined. Although the inner city once made up half the total urban population, it now accounts for less than 7%. However, for the first time since 1971, recent years have seen increases in the inner city population (+13% in 1990s), interpreted by Horner (1999a) as being symptomatic of wider demographic restructuring, including a shift to smaller household sizes and increased immigration. Despite this newly emerging trend, the overall pattern is still one of suburbanisation, as employment disperses and residential development decentralises. Therefore, the satellite towns around the Greater Dublin Area are still experiencing the highest population increases in the whole of the country. Dunshaughlin (25 km to the north west) has increased by 68% and Maynooth (20 km to the west) by 42% between 1991 and 1996, compared to an average national population increase of only 2.8% (Dublin Corporation, 1999). This reflects a greater willingness to trade off increased commuter distances for moderately lower housing costs in outlying towns (Horner, 1999b). The form of suburban development is typically that of low density detached houses, adding to concerns of urban sprawl, estimated by Horner (1994) as contributing 286 hectares (or about 1.2%) to the built up area every year.

The increase in development pressure in Dublin is reflected in a spectrum of phenomena, including increasing house prices, commuting distances and traffic congestion, as well as shortages of labour in the construction industry. One crude indicator of this is the 65% increase in planning applications between 1993 and 1999. It has been extremely difficult for central and local planning authorities to cope with the resulting workload, leading to a major crisis in planning administration across the Dublin area. The high cost of living and a shortage of skilled planning professionals have left planning authorities seriously understaffed. Nationally, about 25% of all planning posts are vacant, with Dublin being one of the most acute areas of shortage (Irish Independent, 2001). Ironically, new statutory responsibilities will nearly double the demand for qualified planners in the next few years, and although the Republic’s Planning schools have an increased output (from 25 in 1999 to 60 in 2001), the ongoing programme of local government reform proposes the abolition of the highest professional planning position in local government (County/City Planning Officer) (see Department of the Environment and Local Government, 1996).

Given the scale of change in the last ten years, it is not surprising that there has been a lack of consensus over how Dublin should facilitate and react to increased development pressures. Conflicts have arisen between local and national government (Walsh, 1998), between those defending conservation/environment interests and...
An Bord Pleanála has also resulted in the establishment of the planning system (see Zimmerman, 1980). This has resulted in the establishment of supervisory jurisdiction in the planning process, which has powers to intervene in the planning process (see Zimmerman, 1980). This last issue is of particular significance as it has resulted in the establishment of supervisory jurisdiction in the planning process.

Those advocating development and modernisation (Skillington, 1998) and those focusing on social deprivation and wealthy communities (Prunty, 1995). The last issue is of particular significance as some communities have been left behind by the tide of affluence and the 1990s have witnessed a widening of income disparities, increasing relative poverty and a deepening of the intensity of deprivation (Callan and Nolan, 1999).

**Administrative and policy context**

The management of urban issues is governed by a hierarchical institutional and policy framework, headed by the Department of Environment and Local Government, which oversees planning, transport, waste management and sustainable development. The Minister of the Environment also has “general supervisory jurisdiction” over local authorities (Keane, 1982, p. 149), although there is a tendency for the Minister to focus on establishing policy guidelines or quangoes rather than direct intervention in individual decisions. This illustrates a willingness to sacrifice accountability for administrative efficiency and is partly a backlash to previously questionable Ministerial interference in the planning system (see Zimmerman, 1980). This has resulted in the establishment of an independent planning appeals board, An Bord Pleanála, which has powers to decide any planning appeal (both for and against planning permission), resulting in the removal of any contentious planning proposal from direct political influence.

Central Government policy is guided by a number of key documents, the most important of which are the EU’s European Spatial Development Policy (EU Commission, 1999), the National Sustainable Development Strategy (1997) and the National Development Plan (1999). The Sustainable Development Strategy emphasises the need to focus development on brownfield sites or public transport nodes and emphasises the role of the Environmental Protection Agency in controlling large-scale industry and protection of the environment. The National Development Plan 2000–2006 (National Development Plan, 1999) sets out the main objectives of the government, recognises the importance of Dublin to the national economy and acknowledges the major infrastructure deficits of the capital. The plan makes a total provision of EURO 22.360 million for economic and social infrastructure over these six years, EURO 2012 million of which will be spent on public transport in the Greater Dublin area. The spatial dimension to these central government programmes is currently being formulated through Ireland’s first National Spatial Strategy, due to be completed in 2002. This aims to identify a broad national spatial development pattern and develop a dynamic conception of the Irish urban system (Department of Environment and Local Government, 2000). For Dublin, this will attempt to define its role within the European urban system, improve its transport links with other regions and will seek to address the imbalance in development between the capital and the rest of the country.

In terms of land use regulation, all previous legislation has been consolidated by the Planning and Development Act 2000, which represents the most radical revision to the planning system since it was established in 1963. This has included strengthening the requirements for development plans, streamlining the system to facilitate development and restricting opportunities for participation. Central government also guides the planning system by issuing policy directives and general guidance on specific topics such as retailing (Department of the Environment and Local Government, 1999).

The evolution of the physical structure of Dublin also presents a challenge to the form of government that can best deliver political accountability and policy guidance for the changing city. Although this debate has historic antecedence (Horner, 1994), it has intensified in recent decades, resulting in a major programme of reform. In 1994/95, local authorities in the Dublin region were reorganised into the present arrangement (see Fig. 1), leaving the central core under the responsibility of the Dublin Corporation and the suburban areas under three new counties: Fingal in the north, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown in the south east and South Dublin in the southwest. The outlying parts of the GDA remain under the control of the counties of Wicklow, Kildare and Meath, with the eight smaller Urban Districts having responsibility for the largest towns. Like their British counterparts, Irish local authorities are subject to the supremacy of central government, rather than having powers of general competence. Indeed, the Irish political system is characterised by centralised control over a whole range of policy areas, including transport and industrial policy (Tomaney, 1995), land use planning (Bannon, 1989) and urban regeneration (McGuirk, 2000). The scope of political discretion over urban management issues is further restricted by the Irish system of County or City Managers who have their own wide-ranging statutory powers.

At the local level, each planning

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**Table 1 Key growth indicators for Greater Dublin area, 1991–2016**

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<tr>
<td>Population (million)</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>1.75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Households (000)</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>521</td>
<td>675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment (000)</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>549</td>
<td>602</td>
<td>878</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Car ownership (per 1000 population)</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>480</td>
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<tr>
<td>% growth in GDP since 1991</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>260%</td>
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*Source: Dublin Transportation Office (2000).*

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authority must prepare a binding development plan, with seven County Development Plans and eight Development Plans for Urban Districts covering the GDA area. Although there have been major delays in reviewing the city’s planning policy in the past (Davis and Prendergast, 1995), all the County development plans have been updated since 1998, with the plan for the central area completely revised in 1999. This City Development Plan (Dublin Corporation, 1999) provides a strategic overview for future development of the central city and integrates the objectives of the Dublin Transport Initiative (see below). This plan is supported by a number of more detailed Integrated Area Plans in areas requiring concerted regeneration assistance. These represent a move away from a traditional land use based plan to include more social and economic issues and emphasising local consultation (Gleeson, 1999), discussed in more detail below.

Central Government has also initiated a programme of internal local government reform, under the banner of “Better Local Government” (Department of the Environment and Local Government, 1996), aimed at increasing accountability and efficiency of Ireland’s local authorities. This has proposed extending the remit of local authorities, providing additional public scrutiny and performance indicators, while introducing a new system of government finance so that they receive all the proceeds from motor taxation. This programme of reform has also begun to restructure council committees, with the creation of Strategic Policy Committees for policy areas such as Environment, Economic Development and Roads, which incorporate not only political representatives, but also interest groups and partnership organisations.

“Better Local Government” also addressed a historical policy vacuum at the regional scale, which had previously been blamed for failures to sufficiently co-ordinate planning activities by the local authorities in the Dublin area (MacLaran, 1993). Although a non-statutory Dublin Regional Authority (covering the Dublin Corporation, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal and South Dublin) was formed in 1994 with “the limited role of promoting co-ordination of public services” (Local Government Act, 1991), “Better Local Government” (Department of the Environment and Local Government, 1996) proposed that planning guidelines should be jointly prepared with the mid-east Region (Kildare, Meath and Wicklow), which would have to be respected by the development plans of the constituent councils. The “Strategic Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area” were published in 1999 (Brady Shipman Martin et al, 1999). This provides a broad spatial strategy for land use and infrastructure for the area up to 2011 (see Fig. 2), based on major transport corridors, the consolidation of development in key areas, enhanced public transport and increasing overall densities.

The Dublin Regional Authority is progressively taking on additional areas of strategic co-ordination, being the key organisation behind the Dublin Waste Management Strategy, the Dublin Transportation Office (see below), Agenda 21 Regional Network and a European Office for Dublin in Brussels. The future arrangements for strategic planning are, however, once again under review, with the publication in March 2001 of proposals to establish a new statutory agency for strategic land use planning, transport planning and implementation for the GDA area. It is expected that legislation will be introduced for this new agency in Autumn 2001 (Department of Environment and Local Government/Department of Public Enterprise, 2001).

Set against these formal institutional arrangements has been the propensity for urban management to become more market-oriented and a tendency to incorporate development interests into policy networks at the expense of local politicians and officers. McGuirk (1994, 2000) has illustrated how this has affected planning and urban regeneration in Dublin from the 1980s onwards with cumulative restrictions placed on the role and responsibilities of the local planning authorities, offset by more direct central government intervention. As such, McGuirk (2000) (p. 658) suggests that local planners have played only a minor role in creating the major shifts in the physical, social and cultural fabric of the city because their marginalisation from the power flows of new policy networks.

To further clarify how these institutions and policies relate to the last ten years of economic growth, three key issues will now be explained in a little more depth — urban regeneration, housing and transport.

**Urban regeneration**

Urban renewal is a relatively recent phenomenon in the Irish Republic, compared to most other European countries, as it did not become a concerted government activity until the 1980s. At this time, the whole of Ireland was in deep economic recession, with widespread urban decay throughout the country, leading to Dublin being described as “probably the shabbiest, most derelict city in Europe” (MacDonald, 1985), with 65 hectares of derelict land within the inner city. Although there were small fragmented initiatives in the early 1980s, such as a programme of inner city housing renewal (MacLaran, 1999) and ad hoc proposals under the Inner City and Development Areas Bills of 1982, it was not until the late 1980s that a more substantive approach was adopted. In 1986, drawing on the market orientated approaches of the UK and US, the Irish government kick-started the urban renewal process with the introduction of the Urban Renewal Act. This contained two main mechanisms, first it promoted the creation of special bodies to oversee redevelopment of specific areas, thus bypassing the local authorities (McGuirk, 1994) and second, it allowed the Minister for the Environment to designate areas of Irish cities for tax incentive purposes. The combined impact of these has been profound, stimulating a major development boom in office and residential development (MacLaran, 1999). While there are now urban regeneration initiatives distributed across the inner city and city fringe, two city areas have had particularly high profiles.

First is the Docklands area, which has pursued a market-led regeneration strategy seen in a host of waterfront areas across the world, while the second, Temple Bar, has provided a highly innovative and successful cultural regeneration approach.
Lying just to the east of the main central business district is Dublin Docklands. By the 1980s port activities had retreated downstream, leaving a vast area of industrial dereliction and deprivation characterised by low value land uses, a chronic shortage of public amenities and a residual population largely dependent on state benefits (Moore, 1999). In the light of the Urban Renewal Act 1986, a large part of Docklands was handed over to a new regeneration agency, the Custom House Dock Development Authority (CHDDA). Its first brief was to secure the redevelopment of a 27-acre site on the Northside of the docklands, known as the Custom House Dock. The CHDDA was given powers to acquire, hold and manage land, in a similar way to the UK’s Urban Development Corporations, with a statutory duty to prepare planning schemes for the initial redevelopment of the area. Although initially the concept of an International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) was not within the redevelopment plans, the Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Charles Haughey, not unknown to intervene in planning issues, actively backed the idea, leading to generous tax concessions for financial companies locating in the area. The IFSC is now only one of the major developments in the area, with Dublin Docklands now a firmly established prime office location (see Fig. 3).

On the back of this success, Central Government established a new regeneration organisation, the Dublin Docklands Development Authority (DDA) in 1997, responsible for over 213 hectares of land in the docklands area. Although more accountable than the earlier CHDDA, the DDDA, has taken a similar approach by initially luring development into the area through fiscal incentives and a flexible planning...
regime. A key element of the strategy has been the use of the “Planning Scheme”, which allows conforming development to gain fast track planning permission and avoid the risks entailed in third party appeals. A planning scheme details the proposed type, extent and overall design of development for an area, together with requirements of meeting the transport, amenity and environmental implications of development. The scheme is subject to extensive consultation and, when adopted, developers may then apply to the Authority for a “Certificate of Compliance”, in the same way as they would for a normal planning application. Once it can be demonstrated that a proposal complies with the Planning Scheme, a Certificate of Compliance will be issued very quickly, effectively providing immediate planning permission, yet immune from the risks and delays linked to a third party appeal. Unfortunately, as in the case of the largest Northside dockland site at Spencer Dock, in the context of a buoyant property market, the developers attempted to secure permission for the overly ambitious development with the conventional planning process. The development of the site is key to the regeneration of the docklands as it accounts for over 25% of the developable area (Kim, 2000). However, after Ireland’s biggest planning enquiry, a refusal was issued for the majority of the scheme and the developers are now entering into negotiations with the DDDA for a more modest Planning Scheme. Although the regeneration of Dublin’s docklands still faces a number of issues such as establishing a comprehensive public transport system and delivering jobs for the local communities (Drudy, 1999) it has been able to attract a range of overseas investors and has provided a stock of good quality office accommodation needed to support Dublin’s burgeoning financial sector.

The second area is Temple Bar, an area of approximately 24 acres on the south bank of the River Liffey, often held up as a model of cultural regeneration. Once characterised by industrial dereliction and destined to become a transportation interchange, it has turned around its fortunes through the intervention of the national government via Temple Bar Properties, a company established to rejuvenate the area as a cultural, residential and small business district. The story of Temple Bar has been well documented (e.g. see Montgomery, 1995; McCarthy, 1998; Russell, 2000), and by using a series of financial incentives, conservation, environmental improvements and marketing initiatives, it has rapidly transformed the area into one of the trendiest places in the city and a major keystone in the city’s buoyant tourist market.

The Temple Bar experience has contributed to an evolving approach to regeneration, now being taken forward by Dublin Corporation in its Integrated Area Plans (IAPs), covering different inner city areas and focusing on physical, socio-economic and environmental regeneration of the distressed parts of the city surrounding the main commercial core (Gleeson, 1999). Five IAPs were designated under the 1998 Urban Renewal Scheme, Kilmainham/Inchicore, O’Connell Street, North East...
Inner City, Liberties/The Coombe and the Historic Area Rejuvenation Project (HARP). This represents a very different approach to the property-led initiatives followed in Docklands, offering more opportunity to integrate land use regulation with a local social and economic agenda. Although the previous Urban Renewal Schemes have delivered £2bn of investment and over 2 million sq. m. of commercial floor space in Dublin and regarded as successful in improving derelict areas and levering private investment, there has been some criticism of the approach taken, particularly of the Custom House and Temple Bar Initiatives. It has been suggested that these have failed to link property led regeneration properly with social renewal and have contributed to the spiralling of land prices (McCarty, 1998; KPMG, 1996). As a consequence, Dublin’s inner city has undergone a shift in social balance as a well-paid, young, middle class has taken advantage of the waves of gentrification, leaving the problems of the original, deprived communities unresolved (MacLaran, 1999; Drudy, 1999). Over the last five years there has, however, been a gradual evolution of the regeneration to one that is far more holistic, offering more opportunities for local participation and has begun to incorporate social exclusion objectives (McGuirk and MacLaran, 2001).

Housing demand and supply

Housing is perhaps the most important issue facing Dublin, with average house prices well beyond the reach of most workers, leading to increased pay demands and a threatening inflationary spiral. With a young population, a high level of inward investment, a strong educated workforce, a tradition of ownership and historically low interest rates, the property market has not been able to meet recent demand. The impact on wage demands and labour shortages has forced the Government to take action, initially by commissioning in-depth research on the national housing market (Bacon and Associates, 1998, 1999) and on residential densities (McCabe et al, 1999). The first of these reports summarised the housing problems as being:

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As a consequence, from the beginning of 1996 to early 2000 alone, the price of existing houses in Dublin increased by 150%, reaching a peak rate of inflation of 33.8% in early 1998 (Bacon and Associates, 2000) and Fig. 4 illustrates the even bigger increase in the private rental market. Although the increase in prices has eased off in 2000 (to an inflation rate of 16%), they are expected to continue to increase by 10% during 2001 (Hooke and MacDonald Estate Agents, 2001).

The National Development Plan expects 350,000 new dwellings to be required in the south and eastern region that includes Dublin (National Development Plan, 1999), with between 8000 and 9000 new houses needed in the Greater Dublin area per annum in the next decade (Dublin Corporation, 1999). Although there is likely to be adequate land availability up to 2006, there is some uncertainty about land supply after this, meaning housing pressure is likely to continue in Dublin for the foreseeable future, with the likelihood that house prices will remain out of the reach of most of the workforce.

The Government has subsequently introduced a variety of measures in a bid to increase supply and lower prices. This has included an initiative to increase relatively low densities of 35–50 dwellings per hectare (McCabe et al, 1999) and releasing the development potential of sites in the outlying Mid East region by substantial investment in transport and other infrastructure. The revised planning legislation of 2000 also introduced a number of initiatives aimed at increasing housing supply, namely:

- Introduction of Strategic Development Zones (SDZ), to ensure more certainty in relation to securing planning permission and the time it takes to process strategically important planning applications. SDZs will allow large-scale residential development to be streamlined. Development proposals are set out in “Planning Schemes”, similar to that used in Docklands. To date three SDZs have been approved: Adamstown and Hansfield in Dublin and Clonmaggedden Valley in Navan, Co. Meath.
- Increasing the size of extensions to existing houses that are exempt from planning permission.
- Introducing an anti-speculative property tax of 2% (subsequently increased to 9%) on the declared value of residential properties purchased for investment reasons.
- Promoting social and affordable housing by increasing local authority construction, improving land supply, increasing mortgage allowances and introducing a requirement for local authorities to prepare a housing strategy as part of their development plans. Local authorities are also required to secure 20% social/affordable housing within any residential development.

Ironically, recent research by Hooke and MacDonald Estate Agents (2001) suggests that some of the measures that have already implemented are actually having a negative impact on the supply side, causing several major property investors to shift from the residential market to the now more lucrative commercial sector. This is likely to mean that many sites in urban areas earmarked for residential schemes will now be subject to commercial development proposals. Furthermore, the supply of new homes, especially starter homes has actually fallen during 1999 to 2000, with housing completions up less than 1% in Dublin (14,280 to 14,381), compared to an increase of 8% in other urban areas. This has also been blamed on the recently introduced anti-speculative measures, particularly the requirement for 20% social housing. With the economy continuing to experience bullish growth, there is still a considerable challenge in achieving stability in the housing market. The government has introduced a wide range of measures, which attempt to address the imbalance of supply and
demand, although the prospect of this is still some years away.

Transport

By the late 1980s, Dublin was already facing major transport difficulties that have been accentuated many times over following a decade of rapid economic growth. As a result, the demand for AM peak hour travel increased by 65% between 1991 and 1999 and is expected to nearly double again by 2016 (Dublin Transportation Office, 2000). With the private car accounting for a growing proportion of trips (72% in 1997), Dubliners face a daily transport crisis with increased journey times and major congestion. Indeed, Dublin can be seen to have a lower proportion of public transport trips, higher car use and lower public subsidy for public transport than most comparable cities (Killen, 1999). In the face of these problems, a major transportation strategy was completed in 1995 known as the Dublin Transportation Initiative (Steer Davies Gleave, 1994). Funded 75% from EU funds, this initiative was subject to public consultation and launched with the promise of providing innovative solutions to Dublin’s transport problems by creating strong links with travel demand and land use planning. The initiative recommended a shift away from previous policy approaches and an emphasis on sustainable development. The key elements of the £1.28 billion strategy included:

- completion of orbital motorway (C-Ring), but no significant increase in radial road capacity within this ring;
- restraint of commuter parking in the City Centre;
- provision of Park and Ride facilities linked to high quality public transport at sites near the C-Ring;
- improved management and enforcement policies;
- investment in cycling and pedestrian facilities; and
- major upgrading of public transport, including three new light rail routes linking city centre with suburbs (LUAS), ten new radial quality bus routes, extension of suburban rail service (DART) and a new rail service to Dublin Airport.

While the DTI can be criticised as not going far enough on sustainability grounds and neglecting to address key issues such as economic disincentives for car use such as tolls and fees (O’Rafter, 1996), it did represent a first step in meeting the transport consequences of growth in a more balanced way than previous policy. The National Development Plan (1999) has made a provision of public transport development in Dublin (e.g. EURO 1191m for LUAS and EURO 233m for DART) and is being supplemented by EU structural funds. However, having a strategy is one thing, actually being able to deliver the key elements is another matter. Some progress has been made with 10 Quality Bus routes, increased capacity and extensions of the DART to Greystones and Malahide complete and 2700 Park and Ride spaces provided. However, the record of delivery is poor, with the Port Tunnel, LUAS, and further DART extensions being delayed as a result of sustained political opposition, project management deficiencies and inadequate resources (Department of Environment and Local Government/Department of Public Enterprise, 2001). The major element of the strategy was the LUAS, a new light rail system that has been subject to a debate of whether it should be street or underground running in the city centre. The Government finally gave the go-ahead to the project in 1998 and construction has now begun.

![Figure 4](image-url)
on the first line, which is expected to be open by late 2002 and the whole planned phase complete in 2005. Furthermore, since completion of the DTI was finalised in 1994, its growth assumptions were quickly outstripped; the population assumptions of 2001 were exceeded by 1997, the employment predictions of 2011 exceeded by 1996 and the car ownership levels of 288 per 1000 population, dwarfed by the 317 reached in 1997.

The slippage in the implementation of the DTI, plus revised growth forecasts have led to a reappraisal of the approach and resulted in an new integrated transport strategy for Dublin, “A Platform for Change” covering 2000–2016 (Dublin Transportation Office, 2000), closely complementing the Strategic Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area, referred to above. This is being taken forward as a strategy, with the two principal elements of first managing demand by reducing overall travel and increasing modal share of public transport and second by improving infrastructure and services. These are being taken forward by many of the same initiatives as first proposed in the DTI, but reviewed in the light of a longer implementation period and additional increases in population, car ownership and economic buoyancy.

The changes to the DTI include extension and enhancement of the Quality Bus Corridors and DART and a new Metro line segregated entirely from on-street traffic. It also proposes further measures to integrate travel modes (Park and Ride, integrated ticketing, etc.) and increase the co-ordination with land use by relating major new development to public transport corridors and bringing forward a parking strategy. The strategy has a phased implementation programme, initially aimed at providing additional public transport capacity, particularly buses and achieving more ambitious modal shifts and demand management objectives in the medium to long term (i.e. up to 2016).

Conclusion

The economic growth experienced by the Republic of Ireland during the 1990s is unmatched in Europe and has transformed Dublin into a modern, world-class city. This has not, however, been achieved without cost. As national and local governments have created a policy regime that has attracted mobile capital and created a favourable business climate, less attention has been placed in supporting this with infrastructure development. Spurring house prices, urban sprawl, intensifying congestion and increased commuting times all threaten the sustainability of the growth process. With the economy projected to continue to grow in the short to medium term there may be no prospect of abatement for Dublin’s housing and transport crises. However, the last few years have seen the progressive development of a more robust policy and institutional framework for tackling these problems, with a National Strategic Plan that makes commitments to major infrastructure development and the development of a National Spatial Strategy that will attempt to decant some of Dublin’s growth to other regions. The new raft of policies gives a clear trajectory of what needs to be done, although there are concerns over the ability to deliver them, in terms of the capacity of both the construction industry and planning system. The prime policy initiatives have been focused on achieving stability in the housing market, with some of the supply-side measures beginning to have an effect. This has been achieved, however, to the detriment of transport and regulation of development, both of which are failing to reflect their full social and environmental costs. The current position is therefore neatly summarised by a recent report of the OECD, who suggest that:

…the general impression remains that too little has been done too late so that infrastructure policy will have to become oriented to supporting the urban system which has just sprung up. (OECD, 2001b, p. 12)

References


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