Chapter 2

This chapter contains two parts. The first part (2.1) describes the socio-economic situation in the SDZ area to date and is largely sourced from the 2011 Census. The second part (2.2) is an overview of the existing and future role of the Docklands. Both parts provide a basis to inform the approach and strategy set out in this SDZ Planning Scheme.

2.1 Population and Socio-Economic Context

2.1.1 Profile of the SDZ Resident Population

The overall Docklands area (comprising the district electoral divisions of North Dock A, B, C, Mansion House A, South Dock, Pembroke East A and Pembroke West A) has increased in population by over 54% between 1996 and 2011. The 2011 Census population for this area recorded almost 27,000 people. Between 2006-2011 alone the population increased by over 36% at a time the city growth rate was 4.2% and 8% growth nationally.

Within the SDZ boundary, the 2011 Census recorded 6,366 people compared to 4,001 persons in 2006, representing a significant increase of over 50%.

The SDZ population represents approximately a quarter of the wider Docklands population. Of the SDZ population, there are interesting trends recorded within the 2011 Census which are important to consider in order to ensure that the SDZ Planning Scheme is relevant in addressing the current and future needs of the community.

A diverse and multi-cultural population exists in the SDZ area, with 55% of the population born in Ireland, 29% born in other European countries and 16% from the rest of the world.

The age profile of the SDZ population is young, with the majority of residents (65%) in the 25-44 years of age category. The second highest category is 15-24 years (14%) and the third highest is 0-14 years (11%). Combined, these figures show that 97% of the population in the SDZ area is under 44 years of age. Persons aged 65+ represent 3% of the total.

These trends are similar to the wider Docklands and city age profiles although the proportion of the population aged 15-24 (65%) is significantly higher than the wider Docklands (50%) and city (43%). It is interesting that while most of the housing stock in the SDZ is new, the extent of the population in younger age categories (0-14 and 15-24) is approximately the same as for the wider Docklands. There are important young age groups within the SDZ and wider Dockland area.

Analysing stages of the family life-cycle, pre-family units represent 63% of the total households reflecting the young age groups recorded.

The second highest category is pre-school households (13%). Early school and pre-adolescent households are 5% each and adolescent 4%. Family units at adult stage are 6%. Empty nest family units and retired stage family units are 3% and 1% respectively.

Household sizes are small (reflecting the young age groups and majority pre-family life-cycle stage) and are

predominantly two-person size (46%). One-person households are also significant and recorded as the second highest category (29%). Three-person households are 18% of the total and four-person plus are 7%.

Family units with no children are the dominant category of household (67% of total) which again reflects the pre-family life-cycle stages with one-child family units the second highest category at 20%, two-child family units 10% and three-child plus family units just 3%.

It is notable that family units with no children in the SDZ area, at 67% of total households, is higher than the wider Docklands (47%) and city (36%). This may reflect the recent population increase and young age groups of new residents with a likelihood that family units with children will increase if the new population remains living in the area as they start their families.

Family units with children tend to have very young children at present. 53% of the households with children have the youngest child aged between 0-4 years. The second highest category is the youngest child of 5-9 years (14%) and third highest category is the youngest child of 10-14 years and plus 20 years (each 12%).

2.1.2 Socio-Economic Profile of the SDZ Population

Looking at economic status (2011 Census figures), the percentage of those at work in the SDZ population, at 80% of the total, is significantly higher than the overall city level at 51% and the wider Docklands at 62%. This demonstrates the strong employment role of the SDZ. The unemployment rate in the SDZ is recorded at 5% which is half the city rate.

Professional workers make up the largest occupation and social class of the SDZ population at 31% of the total, with associate professional and technical the second highest at 21%. Administrative workers are the third highest category at 11%, with managers and directors a close fourth at 9%.

This compares with managerial and technical workers being recorded as the highest category in both the wider Docklands and city (26% and 25% respectively). Professional workers are recorded at 11% for the wider Docklands and 9% for the city and are the third or fourth highest category at those levels. This indicates that the majority of the population in the SDZ, over 1,500 persons from a population of 6,366, is classified as professionals, indicating the strong economic functions of the area and the attraction of young professionals to live in the area.

The main industry types in the SDZ are commerce and trade (37% of the population), transport and communications (21%) and professional services (15%). Commerce and trade is also the main industry type for the population of the wider Docklands (34%) and city (29%) with the SDZ location somewhat more dominant in that sector.

Whereas professional services is the second highest category for the wider Docklands and city (20% and 25% respectively), transport and communications is the second highest in the SDZ, highlighting the communications sector in particular (social media related in particular) as important.

2.1.3 Educational Attainment of the SDZ Population

Advancing from second-level education to third-level assists the ability of the population to gain access to employment and enter the labour market for higher earnings. Of importance for this location are opportunities for the workforce to access employment in the new and emerging industries locating in the Docklands.

78% of the population aged 15 years and over in the SDZ have a third-level or higher qualification which is significantly larger than for the wider Docklands (49%) and city overall (35%).

2.1.4 Modes of Travel of the Local Population

The majority of the population in the SDZ travels to work, school or college by foot (50%) which is positive and comparable with the wider Docklands (46%). More people walk to work in the Docklands than in the city overall (28%).

Other sustainable modes of travel are, however, surprisingly lower in the SDZ with car driver (at 17%) the second highest category. Train travel is 10% and bus 9%. Cycling is 6%.

This is still comparable however with the wider area and city trends where car drivers are also the second highest category (also 17% for wider Docklands). Bus travel is higher in the wider Docklands (11%) and city (17%) and train travel lower (8% in the wider Docklands and 6% in the city).

The journey time to work, school or college is mostly between 15 and 30 minutes for the SDZ population (42% of all journeys) with journeys under 15 minutes the second highest at 25%. Looking at car ownership, 47% of the population has no car while 41% have just one car, showing low levels of car ownership.

2.1.5 Housing Characteristics

The 2011 Census recorded 2759 housing units within the SDZ boundary. Of the total households recorded, 93% of households in the SDZ live in apartments compared with 61% in the wider Docklands and 33% in the city.

In terms of tenure, the majority of households in the SDZ are private rented (62%) with 24% owner-occupied and 11% rented either from the local authority or voluntary body.

Private rented is also the largest tenure type in the wider Docklands (46%) but at a much lower rate than in the SDZ area, with owner-occupied at 33%. Rented from local authorities or voluntary bodies is higher than for the SDZ area at 17%.

In the city overall, owner-occupied is the largest tenure type (52%) with private rented 32% and rented from the local authority or voluntary body 13%.

Within the SDZ area, the majority of residential units were built from 2006 or later (47%) and 29% built between 2001 and 2005. In total, therefore, 76% of the units have been built since 2001, indicating the contribution of new residential units to accommodating the population and recent growth. 14% of units were built between 1991 and 2000. Older housing stock (pre-1990) accounts for just 3% of the total units.

82% of the recorded permanent private households were recorded as occupied, compared to 18% unoccupied.
The number of rooms in private households provides an indication of the size and character of units occupied by the majority of the population. The number of rooms includes kitchens, bedrooms and living rooms but excludes bathroom/toilets, storage space and utility rooms. Smaller units are the majority with three-room households the highest (39%) and two-room households joint second highest at 23%. 62% of units are, therefore, two-to three-room units indicating one- and two-bed character apartments. Four-room units are 23% and five-room + 9%.

2.2 Existing and Future Role of the SDZ

Over the last two decades, the implementation of the Dublin Docklands Project has constituted a remarkable achievement in terms of urban regeneration, and embedding a diverse modern service economy of global significance. While sitting within the broader Docklands hinterland, with its established communities and neighbourhoods, the spatial focus of new development has concentrated on the Section 25 Planning Scheme areas north and south of the river. These areas are now the subject of the current SDZ.

In order to devise a solid platform for new proposals, it is important that the existing context is well understood. While there are many positive factors in the build-out to date, there is also a range of issues and challenges to be met in building an effective delivery model that can implement the aspirations and vision of a new SDZ. The following key areas emerged from an analysis of the existing context.

2.2.1 Function/Role of Docklands in the City

The strategic focus on economic development has been a key driver to date and has led to a critical mass of niche service sectors locating in the area.

The concentration and clustering of this activity is of increasing importance to the Dublin region, to the national economy, and impacts significantly in a competitive global context. The set of support systems and infrastructures, necessary to expand and nurture the economic ecosystem in Docklands, needs to be supported by governance and embedded in the SDZ. Allied to the economic role are a number of strategic spatial dimensions; the building of a strong eastern flank to the expanded inner-city and the re-connection of the capital with the sea and the Bay. In tandem with livelihood and jobs, there is the need to focus on quality of life which can best find expression in an exemplar new urban quarter and attractive neighbourhoods.

2.2.2 Land-use

Good urban places tend to incorporate a lot of diversity and a wide mix in land-use. This helps to create animation and character and ensure activity over the life-cycle of the day and through weekends. Single-use areas on the other hand often suffer from sterility and a lack of character. While some areas in Docklands, notably Mayor Square and Grand Canal Plaza, have an impressive mixed-use character and attractive urban design qualities, other areas are fragmented, windswept and lack vitality.

The tendency towards coarser, larger-scaled buildings, featuring single-use, militates against good place-making. While a primary economic use, such as office activity, is a valid strategic objective for a hub area, it must be leavened by other uses which reflect the urban philosophy, including economic, social, and cultural activities.

2.2.3 Movement

On a city map the SDZ area in Docklands appears to be close to the City centre, yet the experience when one is there is of not being connected. This results partly from the historic physical separation of the working port from the city and from a deficit in road and public transport infrastructure. New bridges and a Luas extension are a major step forward in the building of a movement network aimed at linking the area internally and externally. A limited number of new street links and bridges

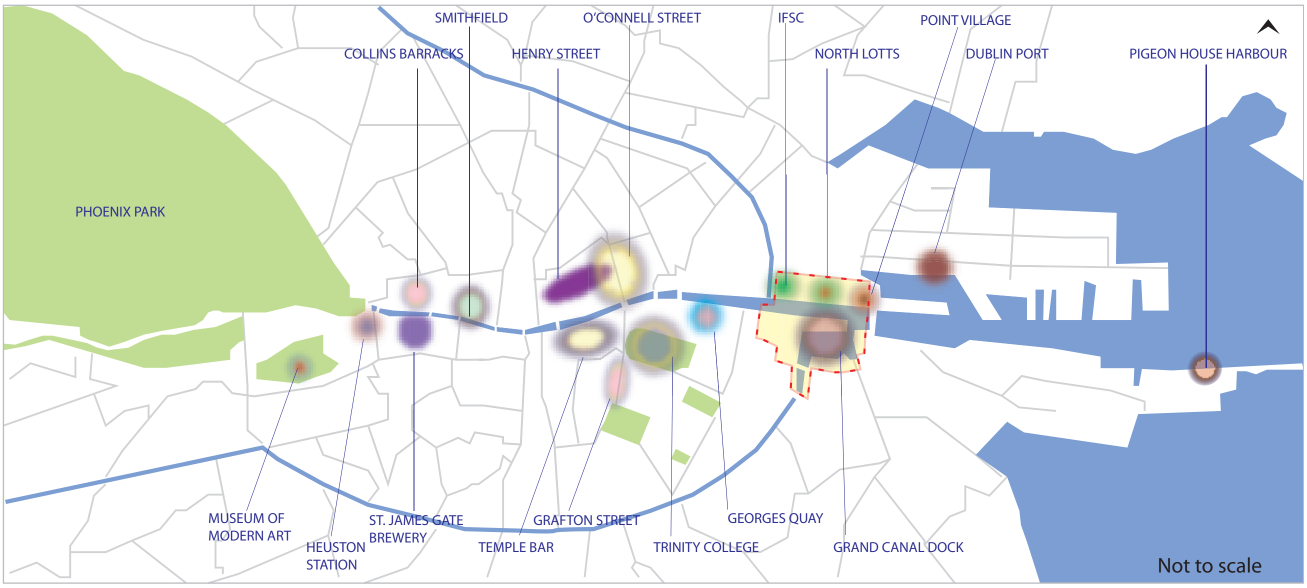

Fig. 8 Liffey Corridor Clusters

will be necessary to underpin the emerging strategic network. In building inter-connection between different travel modes it will be important to prioritise continuity of a high quality walking experience by ensuring consistent standards in a generous public realm network.

2.2.4 Heritage/Sense of Place/ Maritime

The maritime legacy of Dublin is now assuming increasing importance and is more and more being understood as an important extension of the Georgian heritage of the city. This involves an adjustment of mind-set to expand beyond the traditional focus on the Georgian Squares and embrace the river corridor and its 18th and 19th century industrial archaeology. The legacy of maritime infrastructure including surviving built fabric has great potential to underpin the character and sense of place in contemporary regeneration. While the retention of the Inner Docks, Harbourmaster House, Scherzer Bridge and CHQ underpinned a rich public domain in IFSC1, and mediated an excessive ratio of office provision, there is a risk that heritage elements are being eroded as one moves further east. The re-imagination of historic fabric must inform the vision and inspire development proposals rather than be seen as a negative constraint.

2.2.5 Conflict between Living and Working

While the networks and range of economic activity extend to a national and global scale, the liveability dimension impacts more at the local and neighbourhood scale. There would appear to be a tension between office use and its tendency to configure and cluster in single use character areas, and the aspiration to deliver quality of life through mixed use and a rich cultural identity.

There may be some basis to the perception that office precincts lack animation, especially in the evenings. The vision for the SDZ must strive to create the best balance between creating sustainable work environments and creating good places to live.

A creative response to residential needs including family living, and the provision of appropriate social infrastructure, must be combined with the core focus to nurture economy.

2.2.6 Public Realm and Infrastructure

The design and maintenance of an attractive and generous public realm is fundamental to city identity and fostering pride in citizenship. 'Your City, Your Space', Dublin City Council's Public Realm Strategy recognises the critical role of public space in facilitating a rich public life. A strategic network and hierarchy of good public space will also help order and structure the quality of urban design and people's mental maps of an area.

While the public realm can be seen as an integral part of infrastructure, there are other utility and service components that must be considered; Drainage, Water, Energy, Communications, Sea Protection, and Contamination. The need to ensure we have a sustainable Docklands in the decades ahead means that all these services must be assessed and planned for in an integrated manner. This will include the need for audits of the existing context, the identification of gaps and a consideration of phasing and funding options.