Supply Constraints and Serviced Land Development Supply in the Dublin Region: A Review of the Projections and Recommendations of Bacon III

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1.0 Bacon I Report (April 1998)
The first Report recommended the following supply responses:

- Increased densities
- Improved public transport links
- Investment in physical infrastructure
- Review of all Development Plans based on Strategic Planning Guidelines
- A central source for collation, analysis and distribution of housing.

2.0 Bacon II (March 1999)
The second Report recommended:

- Specific proposals for swift improvement in public transport facilities at locations having scope for growth;
- A review of Development Plans earlier than the ordinary five year period in order to harmonise policies and objectives with those of the upcoming Strategic Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area;
- The preparation of a National Spatial Development Strategy and a comprehensive land use analysis relating to the Dublin and Mid-East Region;
- Strengthening the Planning Acts to support the objectives of a modern housing policy;
- Permitting housing within the catchment of the North Fringe Interceptor Sewer on interim/temporary arrangements;
- Considering PPP arrangement for the delivery of the North Fringe Interceptor Project;
- Requiring An Bord Pleanala to provide an evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of its operations and the adequacy of its resources.

3.0 Bacon III (June 2000)
3.1 The report noted that an effective supply response strategy needs to be characterised by:

- Credibility: the supply response should be matched with the necessary commitment of resources to ensure that undertakings are translated into serviced sites and that the necessary planning consents can be speedily obtained.
- Clarity: with regards to where development is to take place and that all necessary infrastructure to facilitate the development of secure and stable community living would be put in place including especially, access to transport facilities.
3.2 The report outlined a range of recommendations to which the Government responded in the following ways:

3.2.1 Use of Strategic Development Zones (SDZs) for Housing
Amendments were introduced to the Planning and Development Bill to make it explicit that Strategic Development Zones could be used for residential development.

Update
Three Strategic Development Zones for housing were designated by the Minister for the Environment and Local Government in June 2001:
- Adamstown, South Dublin County Council (8,000 units)
- Hansfield, Fingal County Council (2,500 units)
- Clonmagadden Valley in Navan (1,400 units).

3.2.2 Establishment of SDZ project offices to drive Infrastructure Development
The DoELG proposed that a series of project offices be established under the aegis of the relevant authorities and that measures would be put in train to secure any necessary additional staff (engineering, planning, technician, administrative staff needed).

Update
- Individual project offices have been set up to deliver housing in the SDZ's.

3.2.3 Removal of Roads and Public Transport Infrastructure Constraints in SDZ's
The Government recognised the need for appropriate public transport services to support key housing development and to secure the best return on available serviced land and therefore:
- The Dublin Transportation Office (DTO) was asked to quantify and cost identify public transport projects required to support housing development and to make provision for key projects in the DTI Update.
- A Standing Committee comprising the DTO, the Department of the Environment and Local Government, the Department of Public Enterprise, the Dublin Local Authorities and public transport providers would be established to ensure integration of new housing development with proposed public transport infrastructure.

Update
The DTO prepared a report identifying the infrastructure necessary to facilitate the development of the key housing sites.

Table 1 below shows the preliminary breakdown of expenditure required for transport infrastructure in the Dublin region up to 2006.

Table 2 below shows the breakdown of expenditure on bus and rail rolling stock, up to 2006. Two scenarios are presented:
- the rolling stock required by the end of 2006, based on the travel demand associated with SPG forecasts
• the rolling stock required if the Bacon III lands on each transport corridor were built to the densities envisaged in Bacon III report, and fully developed and occupied by the end of 2006.

Table 1. Transport Infrastructure Expenditure Preliminary Estimates, 2000-2006 (Ir£M)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transport Infrastructure</th>
<th>To end 2003</th>
<th>2004–2006</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DART/Suburban Rail</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>616</td>
<td>796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LUAS¹</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1,079</td>
<td>1,099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QBC Network</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Roads</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>1,062</td>
<td>1,358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-National Roads</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,126</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,417</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,543</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ LUAS infrastructure costs include rolling stock costs for Sandyford to Stephens Green line (Line B) and Tallaght to Connolly line (Line A and C)

Source: Public Transport Standing Committee on Integration of Public Transport Provision with New Housing Development.

Table 2. Rolling Stock Expenditure Preliminary Estimates, 2000-2006 (Ir£M)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rolling Stock</th>
<th>To End 2003</th>
<th>2004–2006</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SPG forecasts</td>
<td>Bacon III lands near rail fully developed by end 2006</td>
<td>SPG forecasts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DART/ Suburban Rail</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LUAS¹</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus²¹</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>492</strong></td>
<td><strong>562</strong></td>
<td><strong>407</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ LUAS rolling stock costs exclude rolling stock costs for Sandyford to Stephen’s Green line and Tallaght to Connolly line. It includes rolling stock for the Ballymun line, but does not include rolling stock to meet full travel demand on other lines (on the assumption that spare bus capacity is used instead to meet excess demand on LUAS corridors up to 2006)

²¹ There will be spare bus rolling stock available by end of 2006, in both scenarios, following the provision of additional rail capacity by then. Some, but not all, of this spare bus capacity would be used if all Bacon III areas were fully developed.
Update
The Standing Committee has met.

3.2.4 Removal of Water and Waste Water Infrastructural Constraints in SDZ's

The DoELG proposed a number of measures:

- Project offices for groups of key water and sewerage projects
- Existing wayleave procedures accelerated
- Additional schemes approved under the Serviced Land Initiative (SLI)
- Key water and sewerage schemes essential for housing development included in the 2000 Water and Sewerage Services Investment Programme
- Development of a Greater Dublin Area Main Drainage Strategy Study.

Update
The various offices have been established, wayleave procedures accelerated and additional schemes approved.

The Table below indicates the status of SLI schemes in the Dublin Area up to 2003.

Table 3. Status of SLI Schemes in the Dublin Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>At end December 2001</th>
<th>By end December 2002</th>
<th>By end December 2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>At</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction Schemes</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7,570</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction Sites</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4,815</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Public Transport Standing Committee on Integration of Public Transport Provision with New Housing Development.

The completion of these schemes will ensure the delivery of the housing yields identified up to 2003.

The Study of the Greater Dublin Area Mains Drainage Strategy was presented in January 2002.

3.2.5 Improving the Deployment of Existing Planning Resources

Initiatives included:

- Regulations to increase the size of exempted domestic extensions from 23 sq m to 40 sq m
- Promotion of more widespread use of UK/EU Consultants for forward planning, emphasising expertise in high density design
- Discussing with the Educational Authorities ways of producing more planners
Update

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the increase in size of exempted domestic extensions did cut down considerably on the development control workload. Certainly no obvious problems have yet arisen.

Whilst some overseas consultants did engage in the housing market, Irish architects quite quickly began to bring forward high-quality higher-density schemes.

From producing 20 planners in 1999, the Department of Planning, UCD, has now 53 students in first year and 53 in second year. The new course at the Dublin Institute of Technology will produce a further ca. 20 to provide a total graduation output of over 70 planners in 2002/03. Two courses are offered at DIT Bolton Street: a four year full-time undergraduate course (BSc in Spatial Planning) and a 2-year part-time post-graduate course (MSc in Spatial Planning). It is anticipated that 8 students will graduate this year, followed by ca. 19 in 2003/2004. Around 20-25 students will graduate thereafter. The MSc Course expects to have ca. 10 graduates this year.

The number of firms engaged in planning consultancy in the Dublin area rose from 18 in 1998 to 28 in 2002.

3.2.6 Increasing Residential Densities
- The DOELG would monitor the situation

Update

The initial reluctance on the part of both planners and the general public to accept higher densities would appear to have been overcome and there are now many good examples of high-quality schemes which demonstrate that all reasonable residential amenities can be maintained whilst providing a better urban environment. The recent publication 'New Housing' by the RIAI shows an extensive range of constructed and projected works of a very high standard.

4.0 Significant Greenfield Sites

4.1 Bacon III identified 42 sites or areas in Dublin City and County in which significant housing might be anticipated and identified their potential yield by 2002 and beyond to the period 2003-2006. Constraints on their development (services, roads infrastructure, public transport, local area planning) were identified as was their potential yield based on a conjectural density.

4.3 An analysis of these overall results on an area by area basis suggests that:

- Increased yields are a response to increased densities. In many cases, yields predicted at 30 dwellings/ha (dph) were planned to 35 dph and several areas yielded 50 dph
- The numbers of houses now capable of being developed in South Dublin and Fingal would appear to have exceeded the Bacon III estimates for 2002 but this may be as a result of slower activity in the previous period
- The anticipated yields into 2003-2006 period have declined slightly.
Table 4. Potential Yield of Significant Areas of Undeveloped Residential Land in the Dublin Area as per Bacon III (2000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dublin Corporation (Units)</th>
<th>Dun Laoghaire - Rathdown (Units)</th>
<th>South Dublin (Units)</th>
<th>Fingal (Units)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capable of commencing now (subject to planning consents)</td>
<td>4,899</td>
<td>844</td>
<td>11,348</td>
<td>16,830</td>
<td>33,921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>5,978</td>
<td>7,355</td>
<td>3,120</td>
<td>15,030</td>
<td>31,483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-2006</td>
<td>8,935</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8,000</td>
<td>15,757</td>
<td>32,692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19,812</td>
<td>8,199</td>
<td>22,468</td>
<td>47,617</td>
<td>98,096</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Updated Yields, August 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dublin Corporation (Units)</th>
<th>Dun Laoghaire - Rathdown (Units)</th>
<th>South Dublin (Units)</th>
<th>Fingal (Units)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capable of commencing now (subject to planning consents)</td>
<td>8,805</td>
<td>No Information</td>
<td>16,972</td>
<td>42,542</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68,319</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-2006</td>
<td>9,925</td>
<td>11,980</td>
<td>7629</td>
<td>31,534</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18,730</td>
<td>(Say 8,199)</td>
<td>28,952</td>
<td>50,171</td>
<td>106,052</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Quarterly Returns by Planning Authorities to DoELG

5.0 Progress of Some Individual High Yielding Sites

5.1 Adamstown (9,000 units)
One of the candidate areas identified in the report was designated for SDZ status by the Government in July 2001. A Local Area Plan had already been prepared and this is being translated into a SDZ with a more intensive emphasis on the delivery of public transport. Thus, it became enmeshed in the LUTS Study for the Lucan/Clondalkin area generally but it is anticipated that a draft scheme will be put on public display in September.

5.2 Hansfield (1,700 units)
The scheme is in preparation and it is anticipated that drafts will emerge later this year. The anticipated yield (2,500 units) was reduced due to the non-participation of one significant landowner.
5.3 North Fringe/Baldoyle (10,000 units)
This area was suggested by Bacon III as a candidate SDZ area but is being developed by way of an Urban Framework Plan by Dublin City Council and a Local Area Plan by Fingal County Council. An application for circa 2,000 dwellings by Gannon Homes was refused by An Bord Pleanala in December 2000 on the basis of the lack of a detailed Action Plan and access difficulties. A decision to grant permission for ca 300 houses has recently been granted to Ballymore Homes in the Baldoyle site and applications by Shannon Homes and Gannon Homes for ca. 6,000 houses in the Dublin City Council area are the subject of requests for Additional Information, largely relating to co-ordination and quantum location of non-residential ancillary facilities.

5.4 Pelletstown
Applications for ca. 3,300 houses in conformity with an Urban Framework Plan are still being processed. A Decision to Grant Permission was appealed to An Bord Pleanala in September 2001 and is as yet undecided. In June, the Bord indicated its misgiving in relation to prematurity pending the improvement of the road network, the provision of a new railway station, the quantum of services and shops, the level and location of parking and the quantum of open space. The applicants, planning and transport authorities have provided detailed responses and a decision is awaited.

6.0 Analysis
6.1 When the present housing crisis began to manifest itself in the latter part of the 1990’s, housing supply in the Dublin area, particularly the suburbs, was largely characterised by:

- Low and mono density (8 houses per acre) schemes with little or no professional architectural or civic design input
- A certain lack of integration between public transport provision and housing location
- A certain lack of priority regarding the allocation of infrastructure to service zoned land
- An over-emphasis on the protection of the character of established lower density urban areas which were proximate to existing or future quality public transport.
- A greater allocation of planning staff to Development Control rather than Forward Planning

6.2 By late 2002, the principal features of the housing supply picture were:

- The provision by the public sector of large areas of new greenfield housing based on more sophisticated civic design principles, higher architectural standards and very much increased densities.
- The provision of higher-density in-fill schemes in established areas.
- Strenuous efforts to deliver quality public transport, particularly fixed rail to serve these new areas.
- An accelerated infrastructural programme to service zoned land.
- An increased emphasis on public participation in the plan making process.
- A substantial increase in the number of appeals to An Bord Pleanala.

6.3 These rapid and significant changes occurred in a very short period with a consequent potential for conflict between the delivery of high-quality sustainable long-term development and immediate housing needs, particularly for first-time buyers. The problem
still exists of guaranteeing credibility, clarity and certainty and good quality housing which will have an appropriate life span despite the pressures imposed by a still buoyant housing market. Four issues I suggest should receive priority in the immediate future.

7.0 Priority Issues
7.1 Public Transport and Infrastructure
The delivery of higher densities presumes the provision of quality public transport, not only in relation to the future large higher-yielding sites but also for the many housing schemes now under construction which have been designed and built on the assumption of the arrival of quality public transport. In altered economic times, it is essential that the priority given to the provision of quality public transport be maintained in order to provide sustainable settlements and give certainty to the ongoing housing programme. Nor should the infrastructural programme slacken.

7.2 Planning Resources
Though the time scales for the delivery of housing in the SDZ areas are not as speedy as might have been anticipated, such pre-planning and particularly the integration of public transport will result in a speedier processing of the applications when lodged and a more confident passage through An Bord Pleanala. This will involve the continued dedication of planning resources to pre-development planning. In addition, detailed studies should be undertaken of existing areas within quality public transport corridors to estimate their capacities and identify the actions necessary to release their potential.

7.3 The Nature of Plans
The new Act envisages three kinds of plans: Development Plans, Planning Schemes for Strategic Development Zones and Local Area Plans and sets out the procedures for the making and adoption of these. Each of these has a very high degree of public consultation in its design and adoption process and, presumably, applications which conform with their provisions consequently have a greater degree of success on appeal (and one must assume that all significant housing proposals in the Dublin area will be appealed). However, the LAP and SDZ procedures may be inappropriate for smaller areas and Action Area Plans inappropriate for larger schemes. The Minister might consider giving guidance as to the circumstances where LAP’s are most appropriate. Below this level, Action Area Plans or Urban Framework Plans which do not have such intensive consultative procedures might be more appropriate.

7.4 Research
In the light of these significant changes in housing design, layout, methods, materials and the scale of their provision, together with the introduction of the Part V measures, the setting up of a Housing Research Unit might be considered in order objectively to assess the success or failure of the actions and feedback information to ensure the better design of future schemes.

8.0 Post Script (April 2003)
8.1 The Adamstown SDZ has been through its public display process but yet remains to be adopted by the Council. The Hansfield SDZ was placed on public display on the 1st May.

8.2 Gannon Homes have received a Decision to Grant permission for circa 3,500 houses
from Dublin City Council and Shannon Homes for 640 houses. These Decisions have been appealed to An Bord Pleanala by local residents and landowners and final Decisions are anticipated in mid summer.

8.3 An Bord Pleanala granted permission for circa 3,300 houses at Pelletstown in October 2002. The first stage was sold out in Spring 2003 and development has now commenced.