DÚN LAOGHAIRE-RATHDOWN COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION

2026

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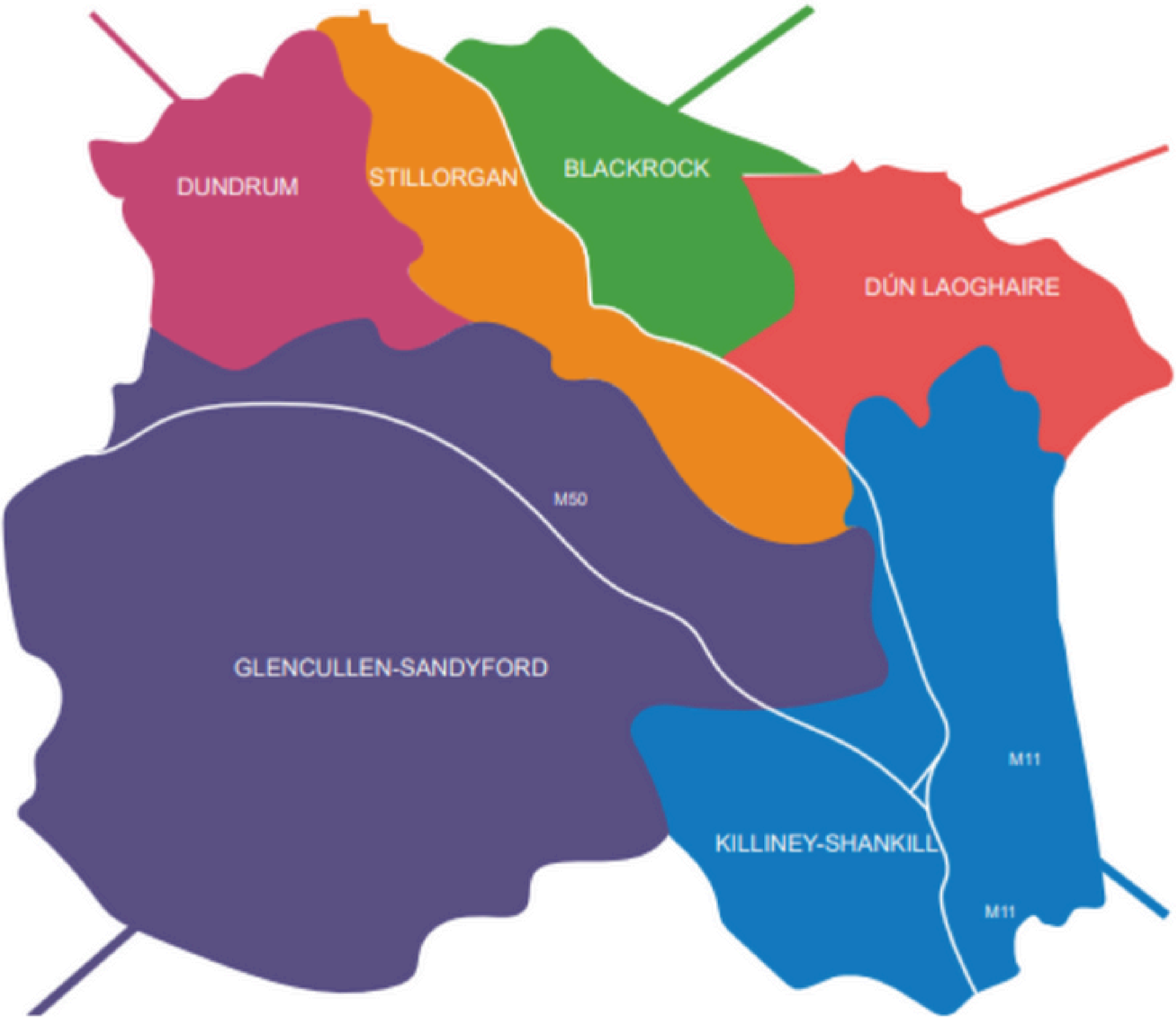
the Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County **Chamber Area**



MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

With a new Government in place since our last Pre-Budget Submission, it is timely to take stock—not only of the past year, but of the progress we have made in Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown on the issues that demand sustained, long-term focus. These are challenges that no single Budget Day announcement can solve. Our county's economy is performing strongly, but that success is creating fresh pressures on the very infrastructure our communities and businesses rely on every day.

Our local economy is thriving, driven by a diverse business base, innovation, and tourism—but this success is straining infrastructure. Roads, transport, public amenities, and digital connectivity must keep pace with growth. The housing shortage, especially for workers and young families, is the most visible challenge, but pressures on energy, water, and public transport are equally urgent.

"Now is the moment to confront and close the infrastructure gap."

Perhaps in the past, there may have been more time to work through lengthy planning processes and reviews, but in Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown that window has narrowed. The effects of delays are already visible—businesses struggling to find space to grow, workers finding it harder to live locally, and infrastructure feeling the strain. Addressing these challenges will require close collaboration between Government, State Agencies, and our Local Authority. By using all available tools—whether policy measures, targeted incentives, or supportive legislation—we can deliver critical projects in housing, transport, and utilities on time. Acting promptly not only contains costs but also strengthens confidence in our county's future.

Meanwhile, our competitiveness as a business location is under pressure from global uncertainty, protectionist trade actions, and the real-world impacts of climate change. Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown is not immune—our retail and hospitality sectors depend on open trade and international visitors, and our technology and life sciences clusters rely on seamless access to global markets. We must use the resources available to Government to safeguard local economic resilience, making long-term investments in infrastructure and the business environment now, while conditions allow.

With record employment levels in the county, we also need to be mindful of the potential for overheating and inflationary pressures. Our call is for Government to prioritise investment in infrastructure that will underpin sustainable growth—housing, transport, utilities, and skills development—over short-term budgetary measures. For Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown, this means ensuring we can retain and attract talent, house our workforce, and support the businesses that make up our thriving local economy.

Revitalising our towns and villages of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County must be a central focus of Budget 2026. The Chamber is collaborating with the Local Authority and Local Enterprise Office and key stakeholders to create vibrant commercial centres that attract residents, visitors, and businesses alike. By nurturing thriving high streets, cultural spaces, and welcoming public areas, we can maintain Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown's position as a leader in both quality of life and economic vitality.

Artificial Intelligence is already reshaping how businesses operate, and with the right investment in skills, workforce planning, and ethical standards, it can unlock significant gains in productivity and competitiveness. In Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown, our strong community of tech companies, entrepreneurs, and innovators is well placed to lead in both AI and the green transition. With sustained support for Research & Development, we can create high-value local jobs and keep our economy at the forefront of global competitiveness.

Our climate goals must remain front and centre. Energy security is a pressing concern for many members, and the Chamber supports initiatives that balance economic growth with environmental responsibility. Guided by the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), we champion policies that protect our natural assets—such as Dublin Bay—while fostering sustainable economic opportunity.

Our 2026 budget priorities, set out in this submission, reflect the voices of our members and the unique strengths and opportunities of Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown. Aligned with the Chambers Ireland Pre-Budget Submission, they chart a clear path for sustainable growth and innovation. We have the talent, the vision, and the ambition to lead—but progress is being held back by infrastructure capacity challenges. With the right investment now, we can unlock our full potential, drive enterprise and trade, and secure a vibrant future for our county. The moment to act is here.

Colette O'Sullivan
Chief Executive Officer

Towns and villages of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County

1. Ballinteer
2. Belfield
3. Blackrock
4. Booterstown
5. Cabinteely
6. Cherrywood
7. Churchtown
8. Cournelscourt
9. Dalkey
10. Deansgrange
11. Dun Laoghaire
12. Dundrum
13. Foxrock
14. Glasthule
15. Glenageary
16. Glencullen
17. Goatstown
18. Killiney
19. Kilternan
20. Leopardstown
21. Loughlinstown
22. Monkstown
23. Mount Merrion
24. Rathfarnham
25. Rathmichael
26. Sallynoggin
27. Sandycove
28. Sandyford
29. Shankill
30. Stepaside
31. Stillorgan

"Now is our time to lead. With decisive action, we can unlock sustainable growth, create more quality jobs, and seize the opportunities ahead..."

OUR POLICY PRIORITIES

Every year Chambers Ireland establishes a set of core policy priorities based on feedback from our network of the common challenges facing businesses across the country. Our priorities for 2025 are:

01 — Competitiveness and Local Economic Growth

Support development of a Coastal Innovation District

Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown is uniquely positioned to host Ireland's first Coastal Innovation District, building on its access to the sea, harbour infrastructure, and nearby research institutions. With strong links to UCD, IADT, and Trinity, the area can drive innovation in blue economy sectors like offshore renewables and marine tech. Budget 2026 should support this vision through targeted investment and public-private partnership incentives.

Prioritize DLR SMEs in R&D tax credit expansions

Many DLR-based SMEs are active in clean tech, biotech, and digital innovation but face barriers accessing R&D tax supports. Budget 2026 should simplify credit access for smaller firms, particularly in areas like Sandyford and Cherrywood, where innovation clusters are growing. This would boost local job creation and strengthen Ireland's national research ecosystem.

02 — Infrastructure and Housing

Unlocking Housing Supply in Growth Areas

The Shanganagh Castle development in Shankill - 597 new homes delivered in partnership with the LDA and DLR County Council - sets a strong precedent for affordable, cost-rental, and social housing. Budget 2026 should build on this momentum by accelerating planning and funding for similar large-scale mixed-tenure projects across Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown, particularly in serviced land zones.

To meet urgent housing demand, interim modular housing should be deployed on council-owned landbanks while long-term builds progress. The upcoming opening of Woodbrook DART station on 10 August 2025 will support up to 2,300 new homes and must be matched by infrastructure investment and integrated housing delivery to unlock the full potential of the Shankill–Bray corridor.

03 — Energy and Sustainability

Support delivery of DLR's Climate Action Plan

Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown's Climate Action Plan sets ambitious targets across energy efficiency, transport electrification, biodiversity, flood resilience, and public engagement. Budget 2026 should back its implementation through dedicated funding streams that enable local authorities to scale action quickly and visibly. Investment in practical community-led initiatives will help deliver on national targets while building public trust and participation.

DLR is already piloting effective low-carbon solutions, such as solar-powered street furniture and advanced retrofit schemes. With further support, these initiatives can be expanded across towns and neighbourhoods to lower emissions, reduce energy poverty, and support green jobs. Funding should prioritise retrofit grants, microgeneration infrastructure, and electrification of public transport and council fleets.

04 — Workplace and Skills Development

Support placemaking through Future DLR

Future DLR and Smart Dún Laoghaire are transforming how the county approaches urban development, using data-driven insights to improve sustainability, accessibility, and community life. Budget 2026 should align with these initiatives by funding digital infrastructure, smart mobility, and innovation-led placemaking that enhances public spaces and supports local businesses.

Town centres in Dún Laoghaire, Blackrock, and Dundrum hold untapped potential to repurpose vacant or underused commercial units—particularly above shops—into housing, coworking spaces, and community hubs. This will reduce vacancy, improve footfall, and foster more vibrant and inclusive urban cores.

05 — Thriving Towns and Cities

Invest in thriving, well-connected town centres

Budget 2026 must accelerate investment in local transport infrastructure to strengthen the vibrancy and accessibility of town centres across Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown. BusConnects projects serving Stillorgan and Dún Laoghaire should be prioritised, alongside the rollout of Local Link-style services to underserved communities like Kilternan and Shankill. The full electrification of the DART+ South West line through DLR will further integrate key growth areas and support the transition to sustainable urban living.

CHAMBERS IRELAND AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown Chamber is committed to the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which provide a global framework to promote prosperity, equality, environmental stewardship, and strong institutions.

As part of the broader Chambers Ireland network, we are working locally to embed the SDGs across business, policy, and community life. Through our advocacy, member engagement, and public-facing initiatives, we promote sustainable practices and champion innovation that contributes to a greener, more inclusive economy.

The SDGs are not just aspirational - they are actionable. In Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown, they guide our support for vibrant town centres, clean energy adoption, climate resilience, education and skills development, gender equality, and decent work for all. From encouraging sustainable transport links to promoting adaptive reuse of commercial spaces, the Chamber actively supports businesses in aligning with SDG goals while also maintaining growth.

This Pre-Budget Submission reflects our strong alignment with the SDGs. It outlines clear policy asks that, if implemented, will advance national progress while delivering tangible local outcomes for Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown's businesses and communities

INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The long-term competitiveness of Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown depends on the delivery of resilient, future-ready infrastructure and the nurturing of an innovation-driven economy. Without targeted investment, the area risks becoming increasingly unaffordable, disconnected, and uncompetitive.

Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown's future competitiveness depends on the timely delivery of critical infrastructure and the development of high-impact innovation ecosystems. While the region benefits from strong business districts, research links, and a skilled workforce, ongoing challenges in housing, transport, and water infrastructure are limiting sustainable growth.

We need to build on and support existing tech businesses and innovation centres. By also welcoming new innovation hubs, we can expand the tech cluster, drive job creation, and ensure top talent remains within our community.

Budget 2026 should prioritise investment in infrastructure that supports economic density, innovation, and decarbonisation—particularly in areas like Sandyford and Cherrywood. Expanding R&D supports for SMEs and improving digital connectivity will also strengthen local enterprise and ensure DLR remains a hub for clean tech, digital innovation, and sustainable urban development.

ESSENTIAL INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

Invest in Water and Wastewater Treatment Infrastructure

DLR Chamber Recommendation: To meet housing and climate targets in Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown, government must accelerate the delivery of water and wastewater infrastructure through a transparent, multi-annual funding model. This is essential to unlock zoned land, enable compact growth, and meet increased demand driven by developments in Cherrywood, Sandyford, Shanganagh, and Old Connaught. Additionally, streamlining Ireland's complex consenting regimes will be critical to removing delays for high-impact regional projects

DLR's strategic growth areas depend on timely and reliable infrastructure delivery. The Greater Dublin Drainage Scheme and the Eastern and Midland Water Supply Project are vital to addressing current bottlenecks that constrain housing, commercial development, and environmental resilience. Without sufficient capacity, planned urban intensification risks being delayed or derailed. Government must also empower local authorities with new financing tools—including land value capture and multi-source co-funding—to future-proof infrastructure delivery and maintain investor and community confidence in the planning system.

Efficient Infrastructure Planning and Financing

DLR Chamber Recommendation: To ensure infrastructure delivery keeps pace with demand, capital investment must be planned with greater transparency, accountability, and flexibility in funding models.

Feasibility studies, lifecycle costings, and carbon assessments should be mandatory for all major infrastructure projects, especially rail, wastewater, and digital networks serving urban centres. Aligning infrastructure investment with the EU's Sustainable Finance definitions will enhance DLR's access to green funding and ensure delivery of future-proof, climate-aligned infrastructure.

Urban Development and Land Management

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Transport-oriented development principles should be at the heart of new developments in Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown. The Land Development Agency (LDA) should also take a lead role in shaping a National Land Management Strategy.

New developments - particularly in Cherrywood, Dundrum, Sandyford, Shanganagh, and Old Connaught - must prioritise compact, walkable, and connected neighbourhoods that reduce car dependency and enhance public transport access. This means delivering safe segregated cycleways, accessible paths, and pedestrian-friendly public realm infrastructure. Local authorities must be properly resourced to implement active travel and link residential areas to economic and civic centres. The LDA should directly manage existing state landbanks and support their strategic activation in line with the Sustainable Development Strategy 2024–2028.

Introduce tax-incentivised investment schemes to channel household savings into other more productive markets and opportunities

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Develop tax- incentivised investment channels to facilitate households to move savings into investments that support infrastructure expansion and green energy projects.

Over €150 billion in household savings remain in low-yield bank accounts, representing a missed opportunity for both savers and the wider economy. Redirecting even a portion of these funds into other productive markets could deliver stronger returns for individuals while providing much-needed capital for essential infrastructure and generate increased tax revenues through improved returns and buoyancy. A tax-incentivised investment scheme would simplify the investment landscape, make participation more attractive, and help free up financing for key infrastructure.

TRANSPORT NETWORKS

Integrated and Sustainable Public Transport

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Develop a robust, inclusive network of inter-urban and intra-urban public transport. Continue to invest in Local Link and active travel systems.

Funding is urgently needed to support the rollout of BusConnects in Dún Laoghaire and Stillorgan and to enhance local walking and cycling networks that extend the reach of public transport. Local Link-style services should be introduced to serve underserved areas such as Kilternan and Shankill, ensuring transport equity. These investments will support reduced congestion, improved air quality, and progress toward a low-carbon transport future.

Rail Transport Infrastructure

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Accelerate the delivery of keystone rail infrastructure. Expand trainlines to intercity and freight networks and improve connections to key growth centres and ports, and to support the ENTE (evening and night time economy)

Urgent investment is needed to deliver high-impact rail projects that support compact growth, urban connectivity, and regional integration. In Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown, the electrification of DART+ South West and the delivery of Woodbrook Station are essential to supporting up to 2,300 new homes and reducing car dependency. Budget 2026 must also prioritise intercity freight rail and last-mile links to ports to improve supply chain.

Strengthening Energy Transition

Accelerate the decarbonisation of transport in line with the Avoid–Shift–Improve (ASI) framework, including expansion of low-emissions public and freight vehicles.

Investment should target the rollout of electric buses, Bio-CNG vehicles, and green hydrogen-powered transport across intercity and urban fleets. In Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown, this includes accelerating the transition of the council's own vehicle fleet and investing in charging infrastructure to support local transport operators. Reducing emissions from transport is essential to meeting climate targets and creating healthier, cleaner urban environments.

Sustainable Energy Transition

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Include State-owned airports in the Regional Airports Programme (RAP) and introduce multi-annual capital funding for safety, operations, and long-term resilience.

While Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown does not host an airport, many of its businesses rely on strong air links for trade, tourism, and inward investment. Ensuring regional connectivity through Dublin and Shannon is essential to supporting economic clusters, international education partnerships, and conference tourism. Budget 2026 should safeguard and strengthen Ireland's air infrastructure to retain competitiveness and accessibility for our businesses and global partners.

PLANNING REFORM

Strengthen Planning Departments

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Provide additional technical planning staff and resources to local authorities and state agencies to improve speed/quality of decisions.

Planning departments in Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown face increasing complexity as development intensifies. To maintain momentum on housing, transport, and sustainability targets, they must be supported with multidisciplinary expertise—urban design, climate, transport, and heritage—alongside efficient digital systems. Resourcing is key to ensuring timely, coordinated decision-making across the county's strategic development zones and town centres.

Greater investment in the Judicial System

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Maintain support for planning court capacity and alternative dispute resolution to reduce delays.

Planning-related legal challenges remain a key delay factor in DLR. Continued investment in judicial resources—particularly for the new Planning and Environment Court—is essential to reduce bottlenecks. ADR models should also be expanded to support faster, fairer resolutions for developers, local authorities, and communities.

Local Authority One-Stop-Shops

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Empower local authorities to establish well-resourced, planning-focused one-stop-shops in urban growth centres.

Establishing one-stop planning hubs in areas like Sandyford and Dún Laoghaire would streamline change-of-use, infill, and above-shop housing applications. These centres would integrate technical advice, planning support, and citizen guidance in one accessible location—ensuring decisions are inclusive, climate-aware, and made more efficiently.

Encourage Adaptive Reuse and Repurposing

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Streamline fire, safety, and planning rules to enable conversion of vacant or underused buildings.

Dún Laoghaire Rathdown's town centres offer significant potential for reuse of vacant upper floors and commercial units. Current misalignments between Croí Cónaithe rules, fire codes, and planning regulations are a barrier to activating this space for homes, offices, and creative enterprise. Budget 2026 should enable policy alignment to support compact, sustainable growth.
An Agency and or sufficient funding is required to complete renovation of vacant upper floors.

Streamline the Planning Regime with Firm Guidelines

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Adopt clear, consistent planning guidelines across all consenting authorities, prioritising critical infrastructure projects to deliver national housing and climate targets.

For Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown, predictable planning processes are essential to meet housing delivery timelines in areas like Cherrywood, Dundrum, Sandyford, Shanganagh, and Old Connaught. Firm guidelines, aligned objection timelines, and streamlined procedures will reduce uncertainty for developers and accelerate decisions on strategic infrastructure. This will help avoid costly delays, unlock zoned land, and ensure projects progress in line with compact growth and sustainability objectives.

Regional Assemblies Investment

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Increase funding for Regional Assemblies to expand expert planning support and strengthen coordination between local and national infrastructure priorities.

Utilising the Regional Assemblies' expertise and resources is important for strategic planning. By increasing their internal resources, Regional Assemblies can offer high-skilled expert planning services to local authorities. They can also guide the integration of Local Area Plans with regional and national infrastructure.

FOSTERING INNOVATION

Establish a Strategic State Capital Investment Scheme

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Introduce a €200 million Strategic Capital Investment Scheme over five years to support transformative, high-growth projects in sectors such as biotechnology, marine tech, renewable energy, health innovation, fin tech and AI.

Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown is home to innovation hubs in Sandyford Business District and UCD, Cherrywood, and IADT that could benefit from targeted capital investment. A scheme modelled on the successful agrifood programme would unlock private sector co-funding, create high-value jobs, and strengthen Ireland's competitive position in emerging industries. This is essential to sustaining growth in both export-led and knowledge-based sectors.

Future Tax Base

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Develop a national migration plan to address the fiscal impact of the shift away from petrol and diesel vehicles, while identifying opportunities for innovation in energy storage and infrastructure.

DLR's climate commitments mean a rapid move toward EV adoption and active transport. As motor tax and VRT revenues decline, alternative revenue streams and infrastructure financing models must be established. Opportunities include incentivising EV battery reuse for grid storage, particularly in urban transport corridors, helping to support energy resilience and low-carbon mobility.

Encouraging Research and Development

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Expand and simplify R&D tax credit eligibility to support SMEs and scaling businesses, raising the first-year payment threshold from €50,000 to €75,000.

Many SMEs in Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown — especially in clean tech, med tech, and digital sectors—lack the resources to engage fully in R&D without upfront support. Simplifying access and raising thresholds will encourage more firms to invest in innovation, strengthening Ireland's research ecosystem and accelerating the growth of local enterprise clusters.

SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

The Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown Chamber is deeply rooted in the social and economic fabric of the County's towns and villages. It plays a critical role in connecting local businesses, communities, and decision-makers at both regional and national levels.

Creating sustainable, inclusive communities in Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown means enabling more people to live and work near where they grew up - particularly in areas like Shankill, Blackrock, Dún Laoghaire town, Dundrum, Rathfarnham etc. This requires compact, well-planned urban development that supports housing delivery, high-quality public services, and low-carbon transport. Apartment delivery must increase significantly, and government must support this with changes to viability thresholds, planning regulations, and funding tools.

Building community resilience also means investing in vibrant, mixed-use town centres. These must serve as places to live, trade, socialise, and connect—especially for older residents, families, and young entrepreneurs. Local authorities must be supported to address vacancy, anti-social behaviour, and underused commercial spaces. DLR's town centres can thrive as social and economic anchors, but only if supported by targeted policies that address both infrastructure and community cohesion.

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Adequate Investment in Housing

DLR Chamber Recommendation:
Increase the Housing for All target from 33,000 units per year to at least 60,000 units annually.

With population growth projected at 1.3% per year until 2031, investment in housing must match future demand. Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown is experiencing growing affordability pressures, and local delivery in areas like Shanganagh, Ballyogan, and Old Connaught requires sustained state support, including tax incentives, serviced land funding, and planning reforms. Housing output must rise significantly to support economic development and community stability.

Regional Housing Targets

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Set clear housing targets for each region to reflect population and economic needs while supporting balanced national growth.

Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown requires regional targets that reflect land constraints, housing typology needs, and infrastructure limitations. Clear targets empower local authorities to plan strategically, secure investment, and align housing delivery with employment, transport, and services. Regionalised targets will also support compact growth, reduce pressure on core urban centres, and improve regional equity in housing access.

Housing Commission Report

DLR Chamber Recommendation:
Develop a transparent national plan to prioritise and implement key recommendations from the Housing Commission Report.

The Housing Commission Report highlights a deficit of up to 256,000 homes nationally. Its implementation must be paired with public reporting milestones, funding certainty, and clear delivery accountability. DLR has shovel-ready schemes—such as the Shanganagh Castle development with the LDA—that demonstrate what's possible with state and local collaboration. Budget 2026 must unlock more such projects at scale.

Unlocking Brownfield Sites for Redevelopment

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Expand financial supports for brownfield development and strengthen the Derelict Sites Act 1990 to promote infill in serviced urban areas.

In Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown, brownfield sites exist in key locations like Dundrum, Blackrock, and Dún Laoghaire town centre, but redevelopment is often delayed due to complex site conditions and higher upfront costs. Budget 2026 should introduce targeted grant supports and streamlined financing to unlock these locations for high-density, sustainable housing. Enhanced enforcement of the Derelict Sites Register and incentives for repurposing underused land would improve supply in areas already well served by public infrastructure.

Revise Cost Rental Limits

Recommendation: Raise income limits for cost rental to include higher incomes.

Currently the net household income limit for eligibility is €66,000 in Dublin and €59,000 elsewhere in Ireland. Raising the income limits will better reflect the average industrial wage of couples who currently do not qualify. This will unlock access to cost rental for a larger proportion of the population. Additionally, there is a need to increase investment in cost rental housing to expand the supply of units. The current number of planned units is limited, and the allocated budget is inadequate to meet the demand.

Increase the Supply of Affordable Homes on the Open Market

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Stimulate the availability of affordable homes for purchase or rent, especially for middle-income households.

The majority of new builds in DLR are outside the reach of first-time buyers and key workers. Greater support for affordable purchase schemes and cost rental at scale is urgently needed. By incentivising mixed-income developments and lowering the cost of delivery, the state can ease market pressures and make secure housing a reality for more families and individuals.

Land Value Capture

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Raise income thresholds for cost rental eligibility and increase the number of supported units.

In high-cost counties like Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown,, couples earning above current limits are locked out of cost rental options but still cannot afford to buy or rent at market rates. Raising income thresholds and increasing state investment in the cost rental model—particularly in sites like Shanganagh and Cherrywood—would better match local demand and prevent further displacement of working families.

Development of Residential Zoned Sites

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Introduce Compulsory Sales Order (CSO) powers to unlock underused zoned land for housing development.

In Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown, several key sites - particularly in Cherrywood and Dundrum around transport corridors - remain undeveloped despite zoning. A CSO framework would enable the Council to compel the sale of land that has remained idle for years, unlocking urban infill opportunities, improving public service efficiency, and enhancing community wellbeing through more consistent, responsible land use.

Direct Procurement Approaches

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Prioritise direct procurement of homes by Local Authorities, AHBs, and the LDA to ensure new delivery adds to total housing stock rather than distorting the private market.

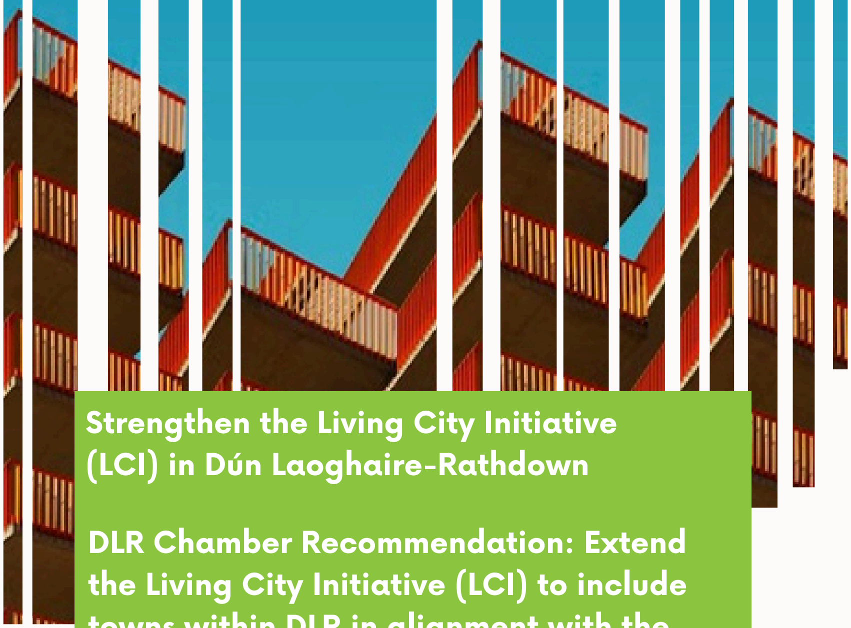
In high-demand areas like DLR, local authorities are increasingly competing with private buyers for completed homes, driving up prices and reducing availability. Budget 2026 should fund direct delivery routes—such as social and cost-rental builds on state lands—to ensure housing output increases, not simply reshuffles. This strategy would stabilise the market and support inclusive neighbourhood development.

OPTIMISE BUILDING STOCK

Extend and Expand the Living City Initiative

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Expand the Living City Initiative to include post-1915 properties and long-term vacant commercial buildings; extend the scheme until 2040.

Town centres in Dún Laoghaire, Blackrock, and Dundrum contain vacant upper floors and long-disused commercial premises. Broadening the Living City Initiative would allow for their sustainable reuse as housing or live/work spaces. Extending eligibility to newer heritage buildings will help maintain urban character while providing cost-effective, low-carbon housing stock in existing communities.



Strengthen the Living City Initiative (LCI) in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Extend the Living City Initiative (LCI) to include towns within DLR in alignment with the National Planning Framework.

The Living City Initiative has proven valuable in supporting urban renewal in key cities. DLR urges Government to expand the LCI to include DLR towns such as Dún Laoghaire, Blackrock, and Dundrum—urban centres identified in the National Planning Framework. This extension would ensure access to vital regeneration incentives, encouraging investment in heritage and underused urban buildings while supporting sustainable town centre living.

Expand Special Regeneration Areas and Tax Incentives

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Expand Special Regeneration Areas to include key urban centres in DLR and introduce targeted tax incentives for investment in vacant buildings

To DLR supports the strategic use of SRAs to stimulate housing and sustainable development. We recommend extending SRAs to appropriate zones within Dún Laoghaire, Ballybrack, and Shankill, aligning with current urban renewal goals. Additionally, we urge the Government to introduce tax incentives addressing the high cost of investing in vacant or derelict properties. Removing barriers such as unused capital allowances or complex ownership transfer mechanisms will unlock investment and revitalise town centres across the county.

Introduce Upfront Assistance for LCI Investment

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Provide an upfront grant or 'Help to Buy'-style scheme to support homeowners investing in LCI-eligible properties in DLR.

To encourage the restoration and occupation of underused or heritage buildings in our urban areas, an upfront assistance scheme should be introduced. This would mirror the existing 'Help to Buy' structure but target revitalisation of town centre properties under the LCI. Such a scheme would streamline investment processes for owner-occupiers and stimulate housing supply in core urban areas such as Dún Laoghaire, Stillorgan, and Glenageary.

Strengthen Vacant Property Registration and Expand Tax Scope

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Vacant Home Tax. Expand the tax to include commercial properties and integrate it with broader land value capture strategies.

Improvements have been made in recent years to the vacant residential property system with the introduction of the Vacant Home Tax. Revenue should monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the tax against the policy objective of reducing vacancy. The Government should roll out a similar scheme that aims to tackle commercial vacancy with the holistic view that long term vacancy and dereliction is an act of vandalism against communities. This approach should be aligned with the broader land value capture strategy (see Land Value Capture recommendation), ensuring that taxation is based on the underlying value of land rather than its current use.

Set Vacancy Reduction Targets at Electoral District Level

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Introduce clear vacancy reduction targets for DLR at the electoral district level to encourage active management of vacant properties.

DLR supports the introduction of vacancy reduction targets to improve transparency and accountability in addressing long-term vacancy. Targets aligned with Small Area and Electoral District data would allow DLR to focus resources where they are most needed—in town centres such as Dún Laoghaire, Ballybrack, and Stillorgan. This measure would also support climate goals by reducing dereliction, optimising existing building stock, and facilitating more compact growth.

Above the Shop Living

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Establish a national Taskforce to remove barriers to 'Above the Shop' conversions and unlock underutilised town centre space across DLR.

DLR's town centres present strong potential for Above the Shop (ATS) living. However, regulatory, financial, and infrastructure challenges remain. We call for a cross-sector Taskforce to drive reforms and pilot solutions to enable ATS schemes—particularly in areas such as Dún Laoghaire, Blackrock, and Dundrum. The adaptive reuse of upper-floor units will deliver much-needed housing, reduce vacancy rates, and reinvigorate our urban cores.

Sufficient funding is required to revonate.

MODERN METHODS OF CONSTRUCTION

State Investment in Modern Methods of Construction (MMC)

DLR Chamber Recommendation: The Government should accelerate delivery of a procurement framework and long-term investment plan to support MMC adoption at scale.

With the state acting as a major purchaser of housing, DLR supports the establishment of a national procurement framework that includes annual delivery targets and multi-year funding commitments for Modern Methods of Construction. DLR is actively exploring MMC within social and affordable housing delivery and believes state support is essential to scaling innovation across the sector.

Financial Incentives for Modern Construction Innovation

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Introduce tax credits and low-interest loans to promote the use of Modern Methods of Construction across DLR housing projects.

Government can incentivise developers to use Modern Methods of Construction by offering financial incentives such as tax credits and low-interest loans, to help offset the higher upfront costs associated with Modern Methods of Construction and encourage the use of innovative technologies that expedite delivery like 3D printing.

Utilise Land Resources for Temporary Housing Solutions

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Movable modular housing should be used as a short-term solution on underutilised landbanks.

To meet urgent housing needs, DLR supports the use of "meanwhile use" modular housing on sites awaiting long-term development. With public and private landbanks in areas such as Cherrywood and Old Connaught not yet active, the Government should enable flexible deployment of temporary modular homes. This will allow DLR to provide interim housing solutions without delaying strategic plans for future development.

Review the Social Housing Targets and Delivery Mechanisms

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Conduct a national review of social housing targets and delivery tools to reflect growing population needs in areas like DLR.

DLR continues to face significant population growth, leading to increased demand for social housing. Current national targets and delivery mechanisms must be re-evaluated to ensure sufficient stock is provided. DLR supports an urgent review of Housing for All to align resourcing and capacity with projected need, particularly in high-demand zones within our county.

VIBRANT COHESIVE COMMUNITIES

Balance Residential Conversion with Commercial Vitality

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Introduce national planning guidance to preserve active ground-floor commercial use in town centres while supporting upper-floor residential conversions.

DLR recognises the value of repurposing vacant upper-floor units into housing. However, maintaining active commercial frontages is essential for town centre vibrancy. Areas like Glasthule, Dundrum, Stillorgan and Blackrock require careful balance to sustain community services, employment, and economic life. National support for funding guidelines and planning policy would allow DLR to strike this balance successfully.

Promote Mixed Tenure in Apartment Developments

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Amend Croí Cónaithe Cities criteria to support a mix of tenures and improve delivery of apartment housing in DLR.

To unlock stalled developments and create sustainable communities, DLR recommends revising Croí Cónaithe requirements. In urban areas like Dún Laoghaire and Sandyford, relaxing the 100% owner-occupancy rule would enable projects to include a mix of rental and ownership options. This adjustment would activate key apartment schemes already with planning permission, supporting a broader range of housing needs.

Accelerate the Town Centre First Initiative

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Increase investment in the Town Centre First Initiative by allocating additional resources through the URDF and RRDF to support urban regeneration in DLR.

The Town Centre First (TCF) Initiative is vital for revitalising DLR's town centres. However, progress remains slow. To support implementation in areas such as Dún Laoghaire, Blackrock, and Dundrum, DLR urges increased funding through the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF). Additional investment will enable tailored local plans that foster inclusive, sustainable urban growth and breathe new life into underused urban spaces.

There is also and urgent need for the appointment of Town Regeneration Officers (TRO) to DLR to support the Town Centre First Initiative.

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Ensure long-term funding for Ireland's postal network to maintain community access and support local economic resilience in DLR.

Post offices in DLR provide critical services—particularly for older people, remote workers, and SMEs—by offering access to banking, communications, and parcel logistics. DLR supports making Government funding for the national postal network permanent to ensure post offices continue supporting town centre vitality and community infrastructure, particularly in areas such as Glenageary, Deansgrange, and Shankill.

Gardaí Resourcing

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Undertake a review of Garda resourcing and investment to realign needs with population growth.

DLR has experienced significant population and footfall increases, placing pressure on community safety and requiring enhanced Garda presence. To address growing concerns about anti-social behaviour, DLR supports targeted investment to increase Garda numbers in high-density urban areas such as Dundrum and Dún Laoghaire. This will support a safe environment for residents, businesses, and visitors while strengthening perceptions of town centre security.

CLIMATE ACTION

Accelerate Climate Action and Investment at Local Level

Ireland is now projected to achieve only a 23% in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Increase national investment in renewable energy infrastructure, local grid capacity, and planning reform to support DLR's climate targets and enable a just transition.

DLR is committed to delivering on Ireland's climate obligations, but national leadership and resourcing are urgently needed. With Ireland projected to fall far short of its 2030 emission reduction targets, DLR urges Government to prioritise investment in local energy infrastructure, including grid upgrades and renewable energy integration. Local authorities like DLR are key actors in delivering climate solutions—from planning and retrofitting to clean energy initiatives. However, the pace of national support must accelerate to match local ambition. Targeted funding, skills investment, and planning reform are essential to ensure that DLR can contribute meaningfully to decarbonisation while creating local economic opportunities in the green transition.

ENERGY SECURITY

Strengthening Grid Infrastructure for Local Renewable Projects

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Prioritise front-loaded PR6 investment to reinforce grid infrastructure in key DLR growth areas, enabling the integration of locally generated renewable energy.

DLR has identified locations within the county that are well suited to renewable energy production, but current grid limitations are a barrier to activation. Government must ensure that Price Review 6 (PR6) facilitates strategic investment in transmission infrastructure to support renewable generation and electrification at local authority level. With anticipated population growth and expanding demand for electric vehicles and heat pumps, grid reinforcement in DLR is essential to deliver a resilient and clean energy future.

Enable Energy Storage Infrastructure

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Invest in battery storage capacity at generation and grid-critical sites within the Greater Dublin Area, including DLR.

To ensure system reliability and reduce the impact of intermittent renewable sources, DLR advocates for Government investment in battery storage technology across the Dublin Metropolitan Area. Strategic storage deployment in urban counties like DLR will strengthen grid flexibility, enhance energy resilience during peak demand, and support the integration of clean energy into the national system.

End Permitting for End-of-Life Wind Energy Assets

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Streamline and extend planning permissions for existing wind energy sites that are seeking repowering or redevelopment.

DLR supports the extension of planning permissions for ageing wind assets where repowering is proposed. Many of these installations are significant commercial rate contributors and community partners. Allowing timely redevelopment will preserve Ireland's wind generation capacity and ensure efficient reuse of infrastructure with minimal environmental disruption. The planning system should facilitate such upgrades in a coordinated, strategic manner to support national and local climate goals.

Future Planning

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Set ambitious and measurable post-2030 renewable energy targets to guide long-term energy and climate action planning.

DLR supports clear national direction on the path to net-zero beyond 2030. Establishing binding, sector-specific targets will provide certainty to industry and empower local authorities to plan infrastructure, zoning, and investment in alignment with national climate objectives. For DLR, this will inform long-term policy across transport, housing, and energy systems as the county continues to grow sustainably.

Invest in Port Infrastructure to Accelerate Offshore Wind

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Expedite delivery of a national ports strategy and invest in Dublin Port to support offshore wind logistics and construction.

As DLR is located within the Greater Dublin Area, strategic investment in Dublin Port will directly benefit the region's green economy. To meet 2030 offshore wind targets and maximise supply chain opportunities, Government should commit at least €500 million to acquiring land, upgrading port infrastructure, and enabling hydrogen and wind energy logistics. Accelerating this development is crucial to positioning DLR and the Dublin coastal corridor as key players in Ireland's renewable energy future.

RENEWABLE ENERGY GENERATION

Boost Research and Innovation in Clean Technologies

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Establish a national funding and market stimulation programme to support research and early adoption of clean technologies, including biomethane and hydrogen.

DLR is home to a growing innovation ecosystem, including Uuiversity College Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology (IADT).

To harness this potential, Government must bridge the gap between clean technology research and commercialisation through targeted R&D funding, infrastructure investment, and demand-side supports. This will stimulate indigenous clean energy markets and position DLR as a regional hub for climate innovation.

Accelerate the Pace of Wind Energy Deployment

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Accelerate the pace of development and implementation of wind energy generation projects.

DLR supports urgent reforms to the planning and consenting system to enable timely delivery of renewable energy projects. Progress to date has been slow, undermining national climate commitments. Streamlining processes will unlock new development opportunities and ensure delivery of wind energy targets beyond 2030. DLR is committed to facilitating renewable deployment through its own planning framework but needs parallel national leadership and investment

DECARBONISATION

Accelerate Commercial Retrofitting Supports

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Scale up and streamline funding for non-domestic retrofitting schemes targeting SMEs, public buildings, and community infrastructure in DLR.

DLR welcomes the ENACT programme and other efforts to decarbonise the built environment. However, many small businesses and public facilities in the county face technical and financial barriers to deep retrofitting. DLR recommends a dedicated stream within the retrofitting programme to support non-domestic upgrades—especially in community centres, schools, and local authority buildings—through enhanced grants and technical assistance.

Invest in Targeted Green Skiils Training

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Fund reskilling programmes across the Dublin region to prepare workers for jobs in retrofitting, renewable energy, and sustainable construction

To meet climate and housing targets, DLR supports urgent investment in workforce transition initiatives. Training in areas such as energy retrofitting, peatland restoration, and renewable energy installation is critical. A regional green skills strategy—including DLR and neighbouring local authorities—will build capacity and create pathways from fossil fuel-dependent sectors into long-term, sustainable careers.

Prioritise Large-Scale and Fuel-Poverty Retrofits

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Focus retrofit programmes on shallow, high-impact upgrades and extend incentives for landlords and low-income households beyond 2025.

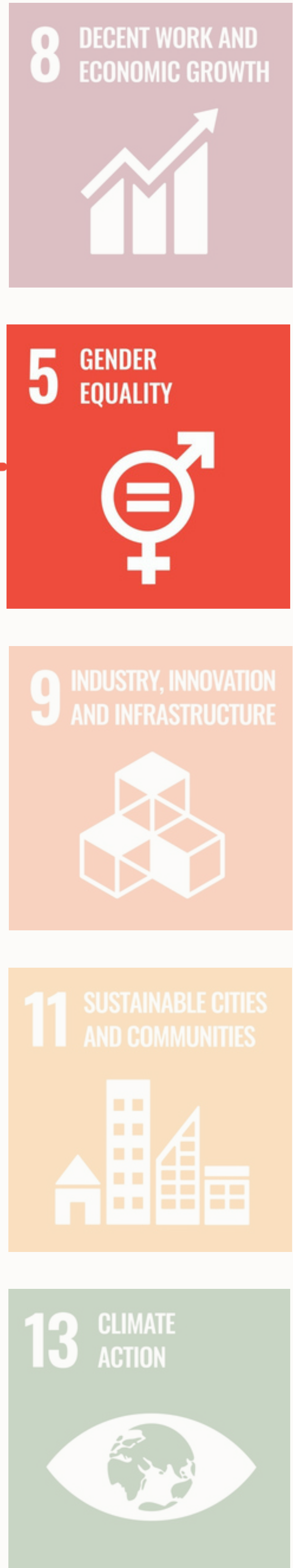
DLR supports a shift toward scalable, cost-effective retrofits that deliver immediate energy efficiency gains. Amending Section 97B to extend incentives for landlords will help improve standards in the rental market, while prioritising households on the Winter Fuel Allowance will ensure a just transition. Many communities in DLR—particularly older persons and low-income renters—will benefit from targeted, accessible retrofit support.

Reduce VAT on Retrofitting Projects

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Apply 0–5% VAT on SEAI-approved retrofit works to make home energy upgrades more affordable in DLR.

High upfront costs remain a barrier for many households and businesses in DLR considering energy upgrades. Reclassifying SEAI-supported works as low-VAT products will reduce cost burdens and boost uptake. This will particularly benefit older buildings in areas such as Monkstown, Dalkey, and Ballybrack, which often face higher renovation costs.

GENDER EQUALITY



Invest in Gender Equality Through Childcare and Inclusive Services

DLR Chamber Recommendation:
Increase targeted investment in childcare, inclusive early years services, and female entrepreneurship supports to reduce gender gaps in DLR's labour market.

Gender equality requires systemic support for working families, particularly through accessible, affordable, and high-quality childcare. While recent increases in funding and subsidies under the National Childcare Scheme are welcome, we are calling for further essential investment to reduce the disproportionate care burden on women, support female workforce and enabling entrepreneurship.

DLR welcomes the progress under the National Childcare Scheme but highlights the urgent need for long-term investment to reduce barriers to female workforce participation. In a high-cost area like DLR, access to affordable and inclusive childcare—particularly for children with disabilities—remains critical. Further funding should also support local initiatives that empower women in business, leadership, and innovation. Embedding gender equality across childcare and enterprise policy will strengthen economic resilience and foster a more inclusive, balanced local economy.

CHILDCARE

Expand Access to Early Learning and Childcare in DLR

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Raise the universal childcare subsidy and expand income eligibility under the National Childcare Scheme to improve affordability and access in high-cost regions like DLR

While DLR welcomes the recent increase in the universal subsidy, affordability remains a major challenge for families across the county. Raising the subsidy further and extending the income threshold will enable more working parents—especially middle-income earners—to remain in the workforce. In DLR's urban centres, the cost of living continues to outpace supports. Expanding availability of breakfast and after-school care, particularly in areas like Dundrum and Dún Laoghaire, will ensure more children benefit from high-quality learning environments and wraparound care.

Increased Core Funding for Local Providers

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Provide sustainable core funding to help small and medium-sized childcare providers in DLR meet staffing and operational costs.

While the €1.37 billion funding announced under Budget 2025 is a significant step forward, core funding should be increased and strategically allocated to address existing gaps in childcare accessibility and affordability.

The provision of high-quality and affordable childcare is contingent upon service providers receiving adequate support in order to meet employee pay and conditions, overhead costs and other costs, particularly as the fee freezes that have been in place for providers in receipt of core funding do not adequately cover rising operational costs.

Many local providers in DLR operate on tight margins and are struggling to remain viable amid staffing shortages and rising costs. Enhanced core funding is essential to retain qualified staff, stabilise services, and expand access. Providers in suburban and coastal communities—such as Shankill, Ballybrack, and Killiney—must be supported to continue offering affordable, high-quality childcare that meets local demand.

Support Inclusive Childcare for Children with Disabilities

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Invest in specialist training, staff, and infrastructure to improve childcare provision for children with disabilities across DLR.

Inclusive childcare supports families and enables equal access to early education. In DLR, the shortage of disability-inclusive childcare services is a significant barrier for many families. Increased investment in adaptive learning environments, specialist staff, and accessibility improvements is urgently needed. Doing so will allow parents of children with additional needs to remain engaged in work or education while ensuring that all children benefit from inclusive, nurturing settings.

ENABLING EQUALITY

Commit to Long-Term Investment in Early Years and School-Age Childcare

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Introduce a five-year national investment programme to sustain and expand early years and school-age childcare provision across DLR.

While progress has been made in early childhood education funding, DLR families and providers need long-term certainty to maintain service quality and affordability. A multi-annual funding programme would ensure services like ECCE, NCS, and AIM continue to grow and reach more children. With population growth in communities such as Stepaside, Cherrywood, and Glenageary, sustained investment is essential to meet rising demand and improve educational outcomes.

Expand Mentoring and Quality Programmes in DLR

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Enhance quality in early childhood education by scaling up "Better Start" mentoring and support initiatives across DLR.

High-quality early years education requires continuous professional development and hands-on support for providers. DLR recommends expanding national mentoring initiatives to help local services meet higher standards and deliver enriching experiences for children. Targeting mentoring to areas with diverse needs—such as mixed-income or multicultural communities—will support inclusive and responsive childcare provision across the county.

Promote Parenting Equality through Policy Reform

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Conduct a national review of maternity, paternity, and parental leave to address uptake barriers and promote parenting equality across all family structures.

DLR supports the development of more inclusive and flexible parental leave policies. A comprehensive review will help remove structural barriers and encourage shared caregiving responsibilities. This is particularly relevant for DLR's growing number of dual-income and self-employed households, where current entitlements often fall short of enabling equitable work-life balance.

Empower Female Entrepreneurs through Targeted Supports

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Launch funding and accelerator programmes in collaboration with Irish universities to support female-led businesses in DLR.

LR has a strong base of women entrepreneurs and innovators who face persistent access-to-capital challenges. We recommend the introduction of microfinance loans, startup grants, and tailored accelerator programmes delivered in partnership with institutions like IADT and UCD. These supports would foster entrepreneurship, build capacity, and drive inclusive economic growth across the region.

DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

13 CLIMATE ACTION

5 GENDER EQUALITY

Invest in Skills, Tourism, and SME Supports to Drive DLR's Economic Growth

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Increase investment in reskilling, lifelong learning, and SME trade supports, while recognising the central role of the tourism sector in DLR's local economy.

DLR is home to a highly educated workforce and a diverse local economy, including strong clusters in creative industries, marine tech, and tourism. To sustain economic growth and employment, Government must scale up investment in Skillnets and the National Training Fund, ensuring workers can adapt to technological and sectoral changes. Reforming the Employment Investment Incentive Scheme will help more local SMEs scale globally. Furthermore, as a key tourism hub – with cruise traffic, heritage attractions, food festivals, mountain attractions and marine sports – DLR should be recognised as a core contributor to Ireland's tourism economy and supported through a dedicated regional tourism investment strategy.

To mirror the National Chambers Ireland submission we are also lobbying to unlock the full potential of our workforce by asking the Government to invest in skills development, reform key legislative supports such as the Employment Investment Incentive Schemes and ensure that SMEs can scale globally through enhanced trade supports. The tourism sector is an engine of regional employment and economic activity and should also remain a central pillar of our national competitiveness strategy.

DEVELOPING & ATTRACTING TALENT

Streamline International Recruitment to Meet Local Skills Needs

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Expedite the introduction of the single permit system to help local employers in DLR address persistent skills shortages.

DLR businesses continue to face recruitment challenges, particularly in tech, hospitality, and care sectors. Rolling out a streamlined, single permit system ahead of the 2027 deadline would significantly reduce administrative burdens and allow DLR employers to recruit from a broader international talent pool. This is particularly vital for high-skill industries based in Sandyford Business District and marine sectors in Dún Laoghaire Harbour.

Align Workforce Planning with Renewable Energy Growth

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Launch a skills mapping initiative to prepare DLR's workforce for careers in renewable energy and AI sectors

Currently, fragmented data and unclear labour pipelines pose barriers to workforce planning, especially in regional areas. Renewable energy skills should be mapped across all NQF levels to allow targeted retraining, upskilling and newskilling to mitigate talent gaps in the sector. A similar exercise for Artificial Intelligence may also be appropriate. As DLR scales up its involvement in sustainability and smart city initiatives, the workforce must be equipped to meet emerging demand in sectors such as renewable energy, data analytics, and AI. A national skills mapping framework would enable targeted retraining and upskilling for DLR residents and help local trainings.

Expand Employer-Funded STEM Apprenticeships

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Increase financial support for consortia-led and STEM-based apprenticeship programmes relevant to local industry in DLR.

DLR's innovation clusters—particularly in ICT, green tech, and digital media—require a skilled pipeline of local talent. Increased apprenticeship funding would encourage more SMEs and employers in the county to participate in training and upskilling initiatives. Expanding support for STEM apprenticeships will ensure that emerging industries in DLR have access to work-ready graduates who can contribute to regional competitiveness.

Cross-Border Worker Mobility

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Reform tax residency rules to support flexible cross-border work arrangements, benefiting workers and employers operating island-wide

DLR-based organisations with all-island partnerships—particularly in higher education, professional services, and NGOs—require clarity on cross-border tax and residency arrangements. As hybrid work models continue to evolve post-Brexit, updated tax rules are needed to support greater workforce mobility between Northern Ireland and Ireland, ensuring DLR remains an attractive base for employers with cross-border operations.

Address Funding Equity Between Higher Education Institutions

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Merge funding streams for technological and traditional universities to support parity and long-term sustainability across the higher education system.

DLR is home to IADT, a key institution supporting creative industries and innovation in the region. Current funding disparities between technological and traditional universities risk undermining institutional autonomy and student outcomes. Amalgamating funding streams would ensure a level playing field, allowing institutions like IADT to compete fairly and provide high-quality education that responds to regional workforce needs.

Extend Human Capital Initiative for Skills-Led Growth

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Extend Human Capital Initiative (HCI) funding for two more years to strengthen DLR's skills pipeline and meet employer demand.

With many DLR employers citing skills gaps in digital, data, and green tech, continuation of the Human Capital Initiative is critical. Additional funding will enable higher education institutions—including UCD and IADT—to design and deliver skills-focused programmes aligned to local industry needs. Extending HCI will also allow time for comprehensive evaluation and impact tracking.

Introduce a Working Age Payment to Support Employment Transitions

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Launch a targeted Working Age Payment for long-term unemployed individuals re-entering the workforce in part-time roles across DLR.

DLR supports a time-limited, income-tested Working Age Payment to assist people transitioning back to employment—especially in sectors like retail, hospitality, and care. A tapering model would reduce the financial cliff edge experienced by individuals coming off welfare, supporting smoother returns to work and addressing local labour shortages.

Advance Lifelong Learning Through Flexible Pathways

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Expand Ireland's Lifelong Learning Strategy with a regional focus on digital and green skills in DLR.

To future-proof the DLR workforce, we support an updated national Lifelong Learning Strategy that emphasises inclusion, digital transformation, and sustainability. With a growing number of mid-career learners and those transitioning from traditional sectors, it's essential that pathways are flexible and accessible. Investment in upskilling and reskilling in DLR will support economic resilience and enable smoother transitions between work and education.

Strengthen the Regional Skills Fora to Meet Local Needs

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Increase investment in the Regional Skills Fora, with staffing aligned to population growth in counties like DLR.

DLR benefits from the Regional Skills Forum structure, which links employers, education providers, and policy makers. However, growing demand across sectors—from digital to construction—requires additional resources. Increasing capacity within the Fora will help DLR address skills shortages locally, foster employer engagement, and deliver coordinated training responses that reflect county-specific needs.

Advance Disability Employment and Inclusion Supports

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Reform disability employment supports and expand funding for workplace adjustments, inclusive apprenticeships, and tailored work placement schemes in DLR

Ireland continues to have the largest disability employment gap in the European Union, with a gap of 38.6%—well above the EU average of 24.4%. The employment rate for people with disabilities in Ireland is just 32.6%, compared to the EU average of 51.3%. We welcomed Work and Access scheme, which replaced the Reasonable Accommodation Fund and the Disability Awareness Support Scheme. DLR continues to experience an employment gap for disabled residents. To close this gap, further reform is needed to remove access barriers and provide training, financial supports, and job placement schemes tailored to the needs of disabled workers. Investment in inclusive employment models will promote independence and ensure DLR's workforce is representative of its population.

Support Parents of Children with Disabilities to Re-enter the Workforce

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Provide subsidised training for parents in DLR caring for children with additional needs to help them return to employment or explore new careers.

Many parents in DLR are forced to leave the workforce due to a lack of specialist supports. Investing in upskilling for parents—especially in areas like psychology, speech and language, or special education—will not only alleviate pressure on services like the HSE but empower parents to re-engage with the labour market in a meaningful and sustainable way.

Boost Construction Apprenticeship Investment

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Increase funding for construction-sector apprenticeships to support the delivery of housing and infrastructure across DLR. talent in the sector for the future.

As DLR seeks to deliver ambitious housing and retrofit targets, skilled labour shortages are a pressing concern. Expanding funded apprenticeships—especially those accessible to young people, career changers, and underrepresented groups—will ensure the local pipeline of talent meets long-term development needs. Investment now will secure future capacity in key construction and green sectors.

IADT's ambition to become a university for the creative industries, combined with DLR's appointment of a Film Officer, creates a strong foundation to establish DLR as a film-centric county, driving both education and employment opportunities.

Unlock Workforce Potential with Targeted English Language Training

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Use the National Training Fund to deliver intensive English language training for people seeking international protection and living in DLR.

DLR has a growing population of international protection applicants and refugees eager to contribute to the workforce but held back by language barriers. A focused investment in business-level English training (C1 standard) would enable faster integration into local sectors experiencing skills shortages—including hospitality, logistics, and care. DLR supports the rollout of intensive training in collaboration with local ETBs and community organisations to unlock this untapped talent. You can find out more about Chamber Ireland's training proposal in their research report 'Closing Skill Gaps: Intensive Language Training'.

Delay Lifetime Cap on Retirement Relief

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Defer the €10 million lifetime cap on Retirement Relief until a full impact assessment is completed to protect succession in DLR family businesses.

DLR has a strong base of intergenerational businesses in retail, hospitality, and professional services. The sudden introduction of a cap on Retirement Relief risks disrupting succession planning and may force premature sales or restructuring. Deferral of this policy will provide space for consultation and ensure indigenous businesses in DLR are not penalised for planning responsibly.

BUSINESS SUPPORTS

Reform Capital Allowances to Boost Business Investment

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Increase accelerated capital allowances for equipment and machinery from 12.5% to 25% annually to reflect modern business investment cycles.

DLR's SME and innovation economy would benefit from a capital allowances reform that better reflects the real depreciation of modern assets. With technology evolving rapidly, businesses must be able to reinvest efficiently in equipment and tools. Increasing allowances will support digital transformation and green investment across sectors operating in DLR—from design and media to marine technology

Reform the EIIS to Stimulate SME Investment

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Simplify qualifying criteria under the Employment Investment Incentive Scheme (EIIS) to promote broader investor participation and SME growth in DLR.

DLR's entrepreneurial landscape relies on access to early-stage finance, but the current structure of EIIS is too restrictive. Reforming the scheme to include greater flexibility and clarity will make it easier for investors to support local startups and growth-stage SMEs—especially in sectors like tech, design, and tourism that are central to DLR's economy.

Extend and Improve the KEEP Scheme

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Extend the Key Employee Engagement Programme (KEEP) to 2030 and reform the scheme to support innovative employers in DLR.

DLR is home to a large concentration of fast-growing SMEs and startups in sectors like tech, design, and clean energy. These businesses rely on their ability to attract and retain highly skilled staff. KEEP has potential to support these goals, but its complexity has limited uptake. DLR supports an extension of the scheme alongside a thorough review focused on user-friendliness, accessibility, and reducing administrative burdens for employers.

Reform Capital Gains Tax to Attract Investment

DLR Recommendation: Lower the 33% Capital Gains Tax rate on non-passive investment and increase the lifetime limit under Entrepreneur's Relief to encourage local and foreign investment in DLR businesses.

To remain competitive globally and within the island of Ireland, DLR supports reforms to Ireland's Capital Gains Tax regime. Reducing the standard rate and expanding Entrepreneur's Relief would incentivise repeat investment, particularly in early-stage and innovation-led enterprises that are central to DLR's local economy.

Extend Energy Supports for Business to 2030

DLR Recommendation: Continue targeted energy supports for SMEs to 2030, with a focus on small and medium enterprises in DLR transitioning to sustainable operations.

Energy remains a major cost and operational risk for many DLR businesses. Long-term supports are needed to enable investment in efficiency upgrades and emissions reductions. Extending energy supports to 2030 would give local SMEs the certainty required to plan, reduce costs, and align with national climate targets—without compromising business viability or jobs.

Consolidate and Clarify Tax Legislation

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Establish a taskforce to simplify Ireland's business tax code, making it easier for small businesses in DLR to navigate tax responsibilities.

The complexity of Ireland's tax legislation often places a disproportionate burden on small businesses. DLR supports the creation of a Department of Finance-led taskforce to consolidate and clarify tax laws into a unified legal framework, allowing for improved compliance and ease of business.

Simplify Business Reliefs

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Review and integrate fragmented business tax reliefs—such as Retirement Relief and Entrepreneur's Relief—into a streamlined and accessible structure.

DLR businesses, particularly SMEs, would benefit from a simplified tax relief system that makes supports more predictable and transparent. Consolidating overlapping schemes would improve clarity for businesses reducing complexity and ensuring businesses access the incentives.

Publish SME Test Results and Integrate Findings into Policy

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Ensure all SME Tests are published and their findings integrated into regulatory decision-making processes that impact DLR businesses.

SMEs in DLR consistently face challenges stemming from cumulative regulation. Increased transparency in how SME Tests inform policy would support evidence-based decisions and reduce disproportionate impacts on small businesses. The "Think Small First" principle should be embedded across all departments to protect the agility and resilience of the SME sector, particularly in high-cost areas like DLR.

Support SME Investment in Health and Wellbeing

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Introduce targeted tax incentives to encourage DLR SMEs to adopt workplace health and wellbeing initiatives.

DLR's business community includes thousands of micro and small employers who lack the scale to implement traditional wellness supports. Targeted tax relief—such as voucher-based subsidies, tax credits, or BIK exemptions—would lower the cost of investing in staff wellbeing, helping reduce absenteeism and improve retention. These supports would also align with national health and productivity strategies while promoting a healthy, sustainable workforce in the county.

Modernise Pension Contribution Tax Reliefs for Today's Workforce

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Update the pension tax relief system to reflect non-linear career paths and support flexible contributions by workers in DLR.

DLR residents frequently engage in flexible, remote, and part-time work. The pension system must reflect modern working lives, enabling those on career breaks, parental leave, or in part-time roles to make meaningful contributions. Reforming the private pension contribution model will support long-term financial security and resilience for DLR's evolving workforce.

TRADE

Broaden Trade Supports for Green, Creative, and EU-Facing SMEs

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Expand eligibility for trade supports to include SMEs in green products, sustainable design, skills, and culture sectors—especially those exporting to EU markets.

DLR is home to a diverse range of SMEs operating in digital, design, sustainability, and the creative industries. Many of these businesses have high export potential, particularly to EU markets, but fall outside traditional export support categories. Expanding the scope of trade supports would enable these enterprises to access international markets, scale operations, and create jobs while contributing to Ireland's green and cultural economy.

Promote Ethical and Sustainable Export Practices

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Support certification programmes and green supply chain initiatives to help DLR exporters meet growing international sustainability standards.

Consumers and global partners increasingly demand transparency, sustainability, and ethical practices. DLR-based exporters—particularly in food, fashion, and technology—would benefit from access to programmes that improve supply chain visibility, support green logistics, and certify sustainable practices. This will boost competitiveness in export markets and align with climate action goals.

Strengthen Global Trade Assistance for DLR SMEs

DLR Chamber Recommendation: Increase funding for the Trade and Investment Strategy and optimise the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) to support DLR SMEs entering and scaling in global markets.

DLR SMEs regularly face barriers to international growth, including regulatory complexity, logistics, and access to market intelligence. Enhanced support through the EEN and targeted export development programmes will help local firms expand globally—particularly post-Brexit—while improving resilience and growth across sectors.

BUDGET PRIORITIES

Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

Essential Infrastructure Investment
Transport Networks Planning
Reform Fostering Innovation

Sustainable Cities and Communities

Housing Development
Optimise Building Stock
Modern Methods of Construction
Vibrant Cohesive Communities

Climate Action

Energy Security
Renewable Energy Generation
Decarbonisation

Gender Equality

Childcare
Enabling Equality

Decent Work and Economic Growth

Developing & Attracting Talent
Business Supports
Trade

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Chamber of Commerce wishes to thank our Board for their leadership and direction, and our members whose contributions and feedback have been invaluable in shaping this submission. Your voices ensure that our proposals reflect the real challenges and opportunities facing business in our county.

We also recognise the ongoing engagement of our elected representatives, whose support in championing these priorities at local and national level is essential to delivering meaningful change for our community.

Particular thanks are due to Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council for their partnership and commitment to collaboration. Their work with us continues to drive innovation, enterprise, and sustainable growth across the county.

We further acknowledge Chambers Ireland for their research and advocacy at a national scale, which provides a strong framework that complements and strengthens our regional perspective.

Above all, we are grateful to the many partners, business associations, stakeholders, and community voices who share our ambition to build a thriving, inclusive, and resilient Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown.

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