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Sláintecare.  
Healthy  
Communities



**Dublin City Council**  
**URBACT WISH Cities**  
**Investment Plan**  
**31<sup>st</sup> July 2026**

## **INVESTMENT PLAN**

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### **1.Setting the Scene – Local Context and Needs**

## 1.1 Introduction

### ***Dublin City - Goal of Investment Plan***

Embedding a Youth- Centred Approach in Local Government Structures using a Human Learning Systems (HLS) Approach.

### ***The city in a nutshell***

Located on Ireland's east coast, Dublin is the capital city with a population of 1.2 million. Spanning an area of 115 square kilometres, it is a bustling metropolis surrounded by scenic rural areas, with a population density of around 10,400 people per square kilometre.

Dublin's history dates back over a thousand years, and its rich heritage is reflected in iconic landmarks like Dublin Castle and St. Patrick's Cathedral. The city serves as the country's economic, cultural, and political hub, with key industries including technology, finance, education, and tourism.

Dublin is a dynamic, global city. It boasts a vibrant international community and actively participates in a wide range of European Union and global initiatives, solidifying its position as an influential centre of commerce and innovation.

### ***Snapshot of youth in Dublin City***

Dublin is a dynamic city with a youth population of approximately 200,000, making up about 17% of the total population. Historically a hub for commerce, culture, and education, Dublin is increasingly defined by its growing tech sector and innovation-driven economy. This transformation brings a wealth of opportunities for young people, particularly in technology, finance, and creative industries.

However, Dublin faces challenges common to major cities, including youth unemployment and housing affordability. Recent Central Statistics Office (CSO) Data shows that youth unemployment rates, although improving, remain a concern at 12.4% (February 2026), while the national employment rate is 4.6%. Additionally, young people in Dublin are impacted by rising living costs, particularly in the housing market. Ensuring that Dublin's youth can access the opportunities brought by its economic growth is a key priority moving forward.

The city also faces disparities in access to education and social services, with certain areas experiencing higher levels of deprivation. The Pobal HP Deprivation Index assesses factors like unemployment, educational attainment, and population change to assign a score. Scores range from 'Extremely disadvantaged' to 'extremely affluent'. We felt that choosing an area of Dublin for our pilot that experiences disadvantage was key. We felt that this would allow us to reach a youth population that may be able to shed light on factors influencing unemployment, educational attainment and wellbeing and in turn be able to highlight the benefits of having a youth voice mechanism within local government.

## 1.2 Needs Analysis

As the aim of the URBACT WISH cities innovation transfer is to explore ways to improve youth wellbeing and youth empowerment, we felt that a needs assessment on current practice was necessary. To identify issues impacting youth wellbeing and youth outcomes in our chosen pilot area, Dublin 10, several key research pieces and sources were considered, including Central Statistics Reports and Dublin City South's Children and Young People's Services' Committees (CYPSC) Evidence baseline Report 2024. On the ground research was also conducted with the local Community through the 'Community Perspectives on Health Needs and Assets in Slaintecare Healthy Community areas in Dublin' and with Youth Services through City of Dublin Education and Training Board ETB/ City of Dublin Youth Services UBU Cycle Three - Area Profile Stake Holders Focus Group/Consultation. Research with youth directly was also consulted including Red C Research conducted by the National Youth Council of Ireland.



Image 1: Children and Young People's Services Report 2024

### 1.3 Problem Identification

#### The Problem

Dublin 10 (Cherry Orchard, Ballyfermot) continues to experience intergenerational inequality that impacts the wellbeing, agency, and life chances of young people. While there is significant community resilience, the systemic challenges affecting youth outcomes require coordinated responses across health, education, safety, recreation, and social inclusion.

However, beyond these challenges, informed by the WISH-CITIES experience, a key structural gap has been identified: the absence of a youth-centred approach within local government systems. While



policy and services are designed to support young people, they are often developed *about* young people rather than *with* them—particularly at a local authority level.

Insights drawn from URBACT learning, including the Milan WISH-M practice, highlight that Dublin currently lacks:

- A structured, participatory youth governance model within local authority systems
- A dedicated mechanism for youth voice beyond the age of 18
- A participatory youth budgeting approach that enables young people to influence resource allocation

This creates a disconnect between policy and lived experience. Decisions that directly impact young people are often made without their meaningful input, particularly for those aged 18–24, who are no longer included in formal youth participation structures such as youth councils.

At a local level in Dublin 10, this gap is further compounded by the absence of a place-based model that actively engages young people in shaping their own communities. While services exist, they are often fragmented, and young people must navigate disconnected systems without clear pathways for influence or participation.

#### **Key issues identified included:**

- Persistent socio-economic disadvantage contributes to poorer outcomes in education, health, safety, and social participation compared to city average. <sup>1</sup>
- Fragmented access to services, with young people navigating disconnected systems, often without clarity or support.
- Absence of structured, formalised youth voice mechanisms with Dublin City Council, resulting in decisions that rarely reflect lived youth experiences.
- Low levels of belonging and influence, identified in youth mental health and community wellbeing assessments.
- Limited opportunities for young people to shape budgets, priorities or local policy, despite strong evidence that participatory governance strengthens wellbeing.
- Systemic barriers preventing departments from working relationally with young people across organisational boundaries.

## **1.4 Policy and Strategic Context**

### ***The Policy Context***

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- <sup>1</sup> Census 2022 data indicates that Ballyfermot–Drimnagh has the highest proportion of residents with no formal or primary-only education, alongside the lowest proportion attaining third-level education among Local Electoral Areas in Dublin
  - Census 2022 also found that over 40% of families were lone parent families

Against the backdrop of a rapidly growing and diversifying population, Dublin City has a well-defined commitment to improving the well-being of its young people and ensuring inclusive opportunities for all.

Dublin has been recognized for its progressive social policies and its focus on community-based development. Dublin City benefits from a National well-developed infrastructure of comprehensive frameworks and strategies which support youth well-being, including:

- Healthy Ireland Framework 2021-2025, prioritising community wellbeing, physical activity, and mental health.
- Healthy Cities & Counties Programme, embedding equity and social determinants of health.
- National Youth Strategy, which emphasises youth participation and cross-sector collaboration.
- Opportunities for Youth: National Strategy for Youth Work and Related Services 2024 – 2028
- National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making 2015-2020
- City-wide youth networks and advocacy groups focused on participation and inclusion

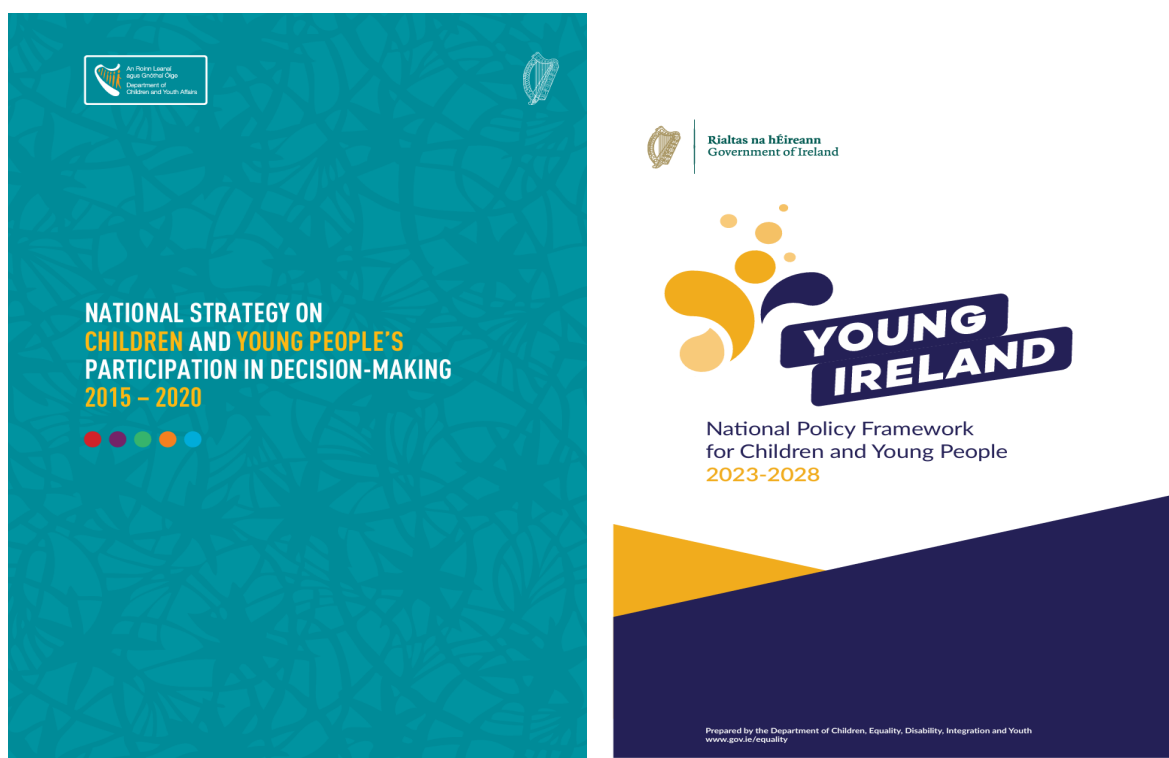


Image 2: National strategy on Children and Young People's participation in decision making 2015-2020

Image 3: National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2023-2028

The city has dedicated municipal services aimed at supporting children, adolescents, and young people, including:

- Youth and Community Development Services
- Education and Lifelong Learning Initiatives
- Sports, Arts, and Cultural Inclusion Programs

### Dublin City Council's Approach

Dublin City Council's approach is guided by the Dublin City Development Plan and Dublin City Council staff sit on the Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSC), both of which emphasize:

- Equitable access to cultural, sports, and recreational facilities for young people
- Enhancing safe and sustainable mobility within the city
- Ensuring youth voices are integrated into local governance and decision-making
- Preventing social exclusion and addressing youth poverty
- Expanding mental health and well-being programs for children and adolescents

Dublin City Council also has corporate commitments to inclusion, equality, safety, health, and community empowerment. Dublin City Council leads targeted health promotion programmes in D10 through the Sláintecare Healthy Communities Program. It has dedicated Community and Social Development Officers and actively works with community organizations, NGOs, and educational institutions to address youth needs, particularly through funding.

Dublin City has a strong tradition of youth participation, supported by council led initiatives such as:

- **The Comhairle na nÓg (Youth Council)** – a structured platform for young people to contribute to policy discussions up to the age of 18 years.

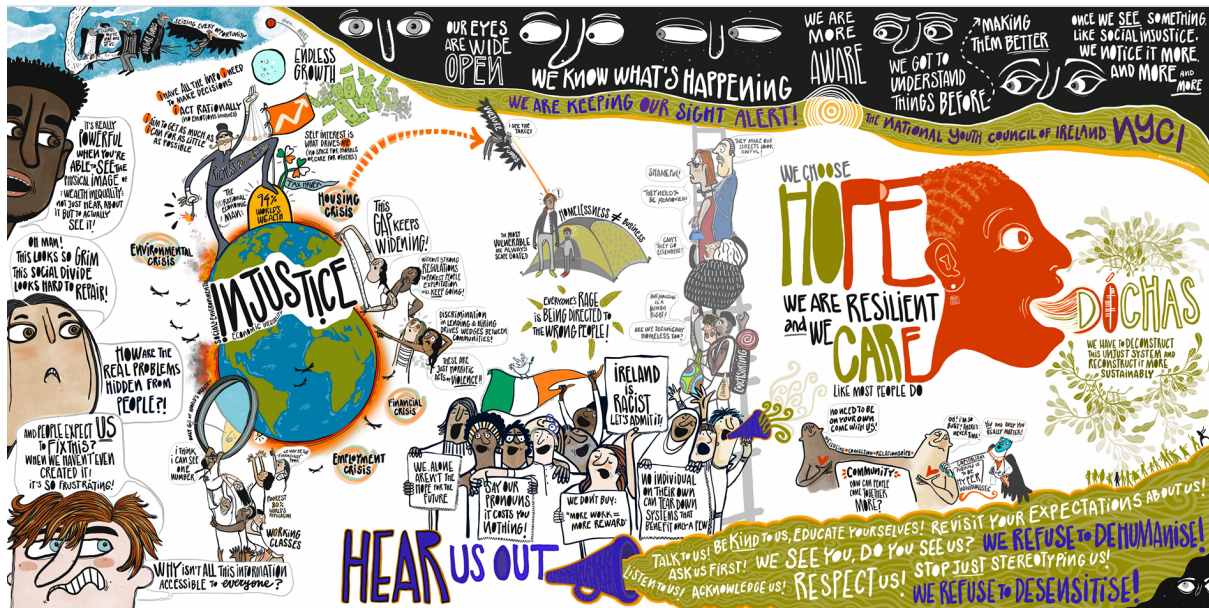


Image 4: Comhairle na Nog advertisement

And wider National Initiatives such as:

- **Young Entrepreneur training program**

- **Ombudsman for Children's Office (OCO) Youth Advisory Panel**
- **National Youth Council of Ireland's 'Local Champions' Initiative** that aims to increase investment in youth work and the development of the tool for young people by young people - 'ECOWHA? What is economics anyway?'



*Image 5: ECOWHA? - What is economics anyway?- Learning Tool produced with young people by the National Youth Council of Ireland.*

## 1.5 Challenges and Opportunities

While Dublin has made significant progress in youth-focused policy and service provision, several structural and emerging challenges remain that continue to impact young people's outcomes and opportunities.

Key challenges include:

- **Rising housing costs and urban affordability**  
Increasing housing pressures continue to affect young people’s ability to live independently, access education and employment opportunities, and remain connected to their communities. This has broader implications for wellbeing, stability, and long-term life chances.
- **Inequality in digital and economic transitions**  
While Dublin’s economy is rapidly evolving, not all young people benefit equally from opportunities in areas such as technology, employment, and skills development. There is a risk that existing inequalities are further reinforced without targeted, inclusive approaches.
- **Fragmentation across services and systems**  
Young people often engage with multiple services across health, education, and community sectors, yet these systems are not always aligned. This can result in gaps in support, duplication of efforts, and limited continuity of care and engagement.
- **Limited youth influence within local governance structures**  
Despite strong policy frameworks, there remains a gap in how young people—particularly

those aged 18–24—are meaningfully involved in shaping decisions that affect them at a local level.

- **Adapting international best practice to the local context**

While models such as Milan’s WISH-M demonstrate the value of youth-centred, participatory approaches, adapting these models to Dublin requires careful consideration of local structures, relationships, and resources.

Despite multiple frameworks and policies emphasising the importance of youth participation, governmental research and opinion polls indicate that young people are increasingly losing faith in democratic systems and often feel that decision-makers are out of touch with their realities. Current participation mechanisms, while well-intentioned, are not consistently effective in ensuring that youth voice and lived experience meaningfully inform policy and practice.



Image 6: Image highlighting REDC Opinion Poll results re Youth Opinions on Government in Ireland

This challenge is particularly evident within local government structures. While there are strong examples of youth participation for those under 18, such as *Comhairle na nÓg*, there is no equivalent, formalised pathway for young people aged 18 and over. This creates a significant structural gap at a critical life stage, where young adults transition into independence but lose access to supported participation structures. As a result, the voices of those aged 18–24—who are navigating education, employment, housing, and identity formation—are largely absent from local governance processes.

Within Dublin City Council, Community Development Teams are embedded across all area offices and play a vital role in supporting local communities. However, these structures do not currently include a dedicated youth-centred function or targeted remit for the 18–24 age group. Engagement with young people is often indirect, time-bound, or reliant on external youth services, rather than being systematically embedded within local authority practice. This limits the ability to build sustained, relational engagement and to integrate youth perspectives into core decision-making across areas such as housing, public space, community development, and service design.



While there is significant community resilience, the systemic challenges affecting youth outcomes require coordinated responses across health, education, safety, recreation, and social inclusion. Although existing policy frameworks are robust, they do not embed a local governance model where young people actively shape decisions at an area level.

The URBACT WISH CITIES project provides a timely opportunity to address this gap by redesigning local governance structures so that youth influence is normalised, resourced, and sustained—particularly for those beyond the age of 18.

## **2. Objectives**

The overarching objective is to embed a Youth-Centred Approach within local government structures using a Human Learning Systems (HLS) approach. This will involve shifting from consultation-based engagement toward a relational, participatory model where young people—particularly those aged 18–24—are active contributors to decision-making processes within Dublin City Council.

To achieve this, phases one will focus on testing actions that demonstrate the value and viability of embedding a youth voice within the day-to-day work of the Council, particularly across Dublin 10. A key long-term ambition is the establishment of a dedicated youth-focused function within each area office, ensuring that youth perspectives are systematically integrated across all domains, including community development, housing, sport, public realm, events, and local service planning.

Core elements of phase one will include the establishment of a Youth Advisory Panel and the implementation of a participatory budgeting process. The Youth Advisory Panel will act as a structured and ongoing mechanism for youth participation, co-designed with young people and supported by the URBACT Local Group (ULG). It will provide a space for young people to identify priorities, develop proposals, and directly influence local decision-making.

The participatory budget will enable young people to move beyond consultation into action, empowering them to design, select, and deliver projects that respond to their own identified wellbeing needs. This approach will build confidence, agency, and practical skills, while demonstrating the value of youth-led decision-making within local government systems. The participatory budget is an intervention that has been inspired by WISH-CITIES such as Villa Nova de Gia and Cartagena.

During the testing phase, workshops and facilitation will be supported by a youth specialist where required, recognising that existing roles such as Sláintecare Local Development Officers and Community Development Workers do not have a specific youth remit. This approach is intentional, providing both immediate support and clear evidence base for the future establishment of dedicated youth roles within the Council.

Underpinning all actions is the Human Learning Systems approach<sup>2</sup>, which focuses on relationships, learning, and adaptability. This will ensure that the model developed is not only effective in the short term but can be embedded, scaled, and sustained as a core function of local government.

## **Progress to Date**

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<sup>2</sup> [Human Learning Systems](#)

Initial groundwork for this investment plan has already commenced. An URBACT Local Group (ULG) has been established, bringing together key stakeholders across youth services, community development, and local authority structures. The ULG has established a shared understanding of the challenge and the ambition to embed a youth-centred approach within Dublin City Council. The consultation with our ULG influenced our premise, recruitment, areas to be considered and age range to target. The range of 17–24-year-olds was decided on with the agreement that this could be split into two groups if necessary. The ULG supported us in the recruitment of young people from across the area and identified hard to reach groups. The ULG will be consulted on an ongoing basis to support the execution of our plan.

In parallel, a Youth Advisory Panel has been developed as a core testing action of this plan. This marked an important shift from concept to practice. Having met with our Dublin City Council Comhairle (Youth Council under 18) Co-ordinator, we identified a facilitator from the D10 Area who has experience with attending Comhairle as a Young person and who has ten years of experience facilitating youth groups. The Panel have already identified key areas in which they would like to see change and have committed to developing further plans and contributing to dialog on issues in which Dublin City Council have influence over in the area including safety in public spaces and information sharing in relation to community events and initiatives. These early actions demonstrate both the feasibility and demand for structured youth participation, particularly for young people aged 17–24, and provide a strong foundation for the testing and scaling phases outlined in this Investment Plan.



*Image 6: Youth Advisory Panel – First Workshop Dublin 10*

## **2.1 SMART Objectives and Phased Targets**

### **Phase 1 – Establish and Test a Youth-Centred Pilot Model in Dublin 10**



Phase 1 focuses on testing a youth-centred governance approach within Cherry Orchard/Ballyfermot through the establishment of a Youth Advisory Panel and a participatory budgeting pilot. The phase prioritises relationship-building, youth participation, systems learning, and the development of an evidence base to demonstrate the value of embedding youth voice within local government structures.

### Evaluation and Learning

Evaluation will be embedded throughout all phases of the project as an ongoing learning and improvement process. During Phase 1, evaluation will be managed locally by the Dublin City Council Sláintecare Local Development Officer in partnership with the Community Development Team. Using a Human Learning Systems approach, reflective evaluation will take place after each Youth Advisory Panel and participatory engagement session, asking: *What worked? What didn't? What needs to change?* Findings will be used to continuously adapt delivery through a systematic cycle of identify, plan, implement, and assess, ensuring the project remains responsive to the needs and experiences of young people. A participatory evaluation will also be undertaken with the young people at the conclusion of the pilot to capture their experiences of the process, assess the impact of the pilot, and identify key learning to inform Phase 2 and the wider scaling of the model across Dublin City Council.

| Objective                                                             | Specific Actions                                                                                             | Targets/Numbers                                                                   | Timeline              | Lead/<br>Responsibility                                                  | Measurable<br>Outcomes                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Phase 1 – Establish and test a Youth-Centred Pilot Model in Dublin 10 | Establish a Youth Advisory Panel (YAP) in Cherry Orchard/Ballyfermot using a Human Learning Systems approach | Recruit and sustain engagement of 11–20 young people aged 17–24 within pilot area | Months 1–12           | Sláintecare Local Development Officer and DCC Community Development Team | Active Youth Advisory Panel established with regular engagement and documented youth participation |
|                                                                       | Deliver structured Youth Advisory Panel meetings and co-design sessions                                      | Minimum bi-weekly meetings throughout pilot phase                                 | Months 1–12           | Pilot facilitators and Youth Advisory Panel leads                        | Number of meetings delivered, attendance levels, actions progressed                                |
|                                                                       | Implement a youth participatory budgeting pilot in Dublin 10                                                 | Secure one dedicated pilot participatory budget allocation                        | Months 4–12           | DCC Community Development Team and local councillors                     | Participatory budget process completed and youth-selected project funded                           |
|                                                                       | Build local authority staff capacity in youth participation and relational practice                          | Train one staff member from each of the 5 Dublin City Council Area Offices        | By end of pilot phase | DCC Community Development Team                                           | 5 staff trained in youth participation and Human Learning                                          |

| Objective | Specific Actions                                            | Targets/Numbers                                                   | Timeline                 | Lead/<br>Responsibility                 | Measurable<br>Outcomes                                                                 |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|           |                                                             |                                                                   |                          |                                         | Systems approaches                                                                     |
|           | Develop evidence and learning from pilot through evaluation | Capture stories, reflections, journey mapping and monitoring data | Ongoing throughout pilot | ULG, ALS partners and academic supports | Evidence base produced demonstrating youth participation outcomes and systems learning |

### Phase 2 – Embed and Scale Across Dublin City Council

Phase 2 focuses on embedding and expanding the pilot model across all Dublin City Council area offices. This phase aims to mainstream youth participation within local authority structures through staff training, recurring youth participatory budgets, strengthened governance mechanisms, and the integration of relational practice within community development approaches.

|                                                      |                                                                                |                                                                                                      |                       |                                                                                  |                                                               |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Phase 2 – Embed and Scale Across Dublin City Council | Expand Youth Advisory Panel model across all DCC Area Offices                  | Establish youth participation structures within all 5 DCC Community Area Offices                     | Years 2–3             | Senior Executive Officer Community & Social Development and Area Office Managers | Youth-centred structures operating city-wide                  |
|                                                      | Secure recurring youth participatory budget funding across Dublin City Council | Present proposal to local councillors seeking annual youth participatory budget allocations          | Years 2–3             | Local councillors, DCC Executive and Community Teams                             | Annual participatory budget funding secured within each area  |
|                                                      | Embed youth-centred practice within local government structures                | Roll out youth participation and relational practice training across DCC Community Development Teams | Years 2–3             | DCC Senior Management and Community Development Leads                            | Youth-centred approaches embedded within operational practice |
|                                                      | Present findings and scaling proposal to DCC senior leadership                 | Submit formal proposal to Senior Chief Executive and elected members                                 | End of pilot / Year 2 | Sláintecare LDO and Community Development Team                                   | Formal consideration of city-wide governance model            |

### Phase 3 – National Scaling and Systems Change

Phase 3 focuses on scaling the Dublin model nationally and influencing long-term policy and systems change. Building on the learning and evidence generated through the pilot and expansion phases, this stage aims to embed youth-centred approaches within local government nationally, strengthen Human Learning Systems within education and professional development, and support sustainable government investment in youth participation and relational governance structures.

|                                               |                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                  |                |                                                       |                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Phase 3 – National Scaling and Systems Change | Develop a national proposal through the CCMA for adoption across local authorities | Present scalable model to the County and City Management Association (CCMA)                                                                      | Years 3–4      | Dublin City Council and national partners             | Proposal considered at national local government level                         |
|                                               | Influence national policy and Programme for Government commitments                 | Develop proposal for a dedicated youth-centred approach within all local authorities nationally                                                  | Years 4–5      | Cross-government partners and Department stakeholders | Inclusion within national policy and/or Programme for Government commitments   |
|                                               | Promote Human Learning Systems within education and professional development       | Engage third-level institutions regarding inclusion of Human Learning Systems modules within social science and community development programmes | Years 4–5      | Academic partners and government stakeholders         | HLS explored or adopted within education and training pathways                 |
|                                               | Establish long-term government-supported youth-centred local authority model       | Secure commitment for dedicated youth-centred functions within local authorities nationally                                                      | Long-term goal | National Government and Local Authorities             | Sustainable, government-funded youth-centred structures established nationally |

### 2.2 Headline Objectives -

The following objectives outline the core aims of the Investment Plan, focusing on embedding a youth-centred approach within local government while building a scalable and transferable model.

- **Establish a Youth Advisory Panel in Dublin 10 as a structured, ongoing participation mechanism**

A locally embedded Youth Advisory Panel will provide a consistent and meaningful platform for young people—particularly those aged 17–24—to contribute to decision-making, co-design local actions, and influence priorities within Dublin City Council.

- Implement a youth-centred Participatory Budget pilot to build agency, confidence, and democratic capacity**  
 A pilot participatory budgeting process will enable young people to design, propose, and select projects for investment, moving beyond consultation into real decision-making and strengthening civic engagement and leadership skills.
- Strengthen youth wellbeing through improved belonging, safety, and relational connection**  
 Through sustained engagement and co-designed actions, the project will support improved wellbeing outcomes by fostering stronger connections between young people, their communities, and local systems.
- Develop shared indicators of youth wellbeing and system change**  
 Indicators will be co-designed with young people and stakeholders to measure what matters most, capturing both quantitative and qualitative changes in wellbeing, participation, and system responsiveness.
- Create a transferable, scalable Dublin model aligned with the Milan WISH-M approach**  
 Building on international best practice, the project will develop a tested model that can be adapted and scaled across Dublin City and beyond, supporting wider system change in how local government engages with young people.

## 2.3 Adapted Practice

Drawing on Milan WISH-M good practice, Dublin will implement a multidimensional approach to youth wellbeing, recognising health, relationships, creativity, safety, and self-determination. We will co-design and co-produce with youth at every stage, as seen in Milan's best practice. We will develop a relational operation model, supported by testing actions that advance shared learning and adaptability. Drawing on wider URBACT practice including Vienna, we will have a dedicated youth participatory budget that will allow youth to decide on projects that they would like to see in their area. Looking at Partners including Milan and Cartagena, we will focus on the 18–24 age group as the Dublin City Council Youth Council, Comhairle does not include youth over the age of 18 years.

A core element of Dublin's adapted practice is the integration of governance across local and national systems using Action Learning Sets (ALS<sup>3</sup>), supported by the Department of the Taoiseach. This approach moves beyond traditional siloed working by creating structured spaces for cross-departmental collaboration, shared problem-solving, and continuous learning.

ALS will act as a bridging mechanism between local practice and national policy, enabling insights from on-the-ground testing actions in Dublin 10 to directly inform wider system change. Through regular facilitated sessions, representatives from local government, national departments, community organisations, and academic partners will come together to reflect on emerging learning, identify systemic barriers, and co-develop solutions.

This approach ensures that the youth-centred model being tested is not developed in isolation but is aligned with national priorities and has a clear pathway for scalability. It also supports vertical integration between local, regional, and national levels, while strengthening horizontal collaboration across sectors such as health, education, youth services, and community development.

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<sup>3</sup> [Action Learning Sets - WhatWorks](#)

By embedding ALS as a “living system” within the Investment Plan, Dublin creates a governance model that is adaptive, relational, and responsive—capable of evolving based on real-time learning rather than fixed programme design.

Dublin’s approach combines both narrative and data-driven evidence to build a holistic understanding of youth wellbeing and system change. Recognising that traditional quantitative data alone cannot fully capture lived experience, this model integrates storytelling and qualitative insights alongside measurable indicators.

A series of micro testing actions will underpin this approach:

- **Co-designed Indicators** will be developed with young people and stakeholders to ensure that what is measured reflects what matters to youth, including belonging, agency, and trust in systems.
- **User Journey Mapping** will capture the real-life experiences of young people navigating services and systems, identifying gaps, barriers, and opportunities for improvement.
- **Reflection and Learning Loops** will provide structured opportunities for ongoing analysis, enabling stakeholders to adapt actions based on what is working and what is not.
- **Story Capture** will document individual and collective experiences, providing powerful narrative evidence to complement data and influence policy and practice.
- **ALS as a Living Learning Mechanism** will connect these insights into wider system learning, ensuring that evidence is shared, tested, and acted upon across governance levels.

Together, these approaches create a dynamic evidence base that is both human and robust capturing not just outputs, but the quality of relationships, experiences, and system change over time. This blended model strengthens decision-making, supports continuous improvement, and provides a compelling case for embedding youth-centred approaches within local government structures.

## 2.4 Integrated Approach

Dublin’s approach is grounded in both vertical and horizontal integration, ensuring that local testing actions are connected to wider systems, while also strengthening collaboration across sectors at a local level.

### Vertical Integration

Dublin will ensure strong alignment between local action and national policy through structured engagement and shared learning mechanisms.

- **Strong national policy alignment via ALS**  
Action Learning Sets (ALS), supported by the Department of the Taoiseach, will provide a formal mechanism to connect local insights with national decision-making. Learning from Dublin 10 will be shared and tested at a cross-government level, supporting system-wide adaptation and scalability.

- **Engagement with Healthy Ireland National Office**  
The project will align with national Healthy Ireland priorities, ensuring that local actions contribute to broader objectives around health, wellbeing, and reducing inequalities.
- **Strategic alignment with youth health and FEABHAS learning**  
Insights from the FEABHAS project and wider youth health evidence will inform both the design and evaluation of testing actions, ensuring that the model is grounded in lived experience and evidence-based practice.

### Horizontal Integration

At a local level, the project will strengthen collaboration across departments, services, and communities to deliver a coordinated, place-based response.

- **Deep collaboration across Dublin City Council DCC departments**  
The approach will embed youth-centred thinking across multiple functions of DCC including community development, housing, public realm, sport, and events, moving beyond siloed service delivery. It is hoped that the YAP will inform planning in areas such as Parks Projects and Community events through informed consultation between young people and the relevant DCC Departments. This will be facilitated through Project Leads.
- **Engagement of NGOs, youth services, community groups, and Traveller organisations**  
A broad range of local stakeholders will be actively involved through the URBACT Local Group (ULG), ensuring diverse perspectives are included, particularly those of marginalised and underrepresented young people.
- **Cross-boundary cooperation with health and education sectors**  
Strong links will be maintained with health and education partners, recognising that youth wellbeing is shaped across systems. This will support more coordinated responses and reduce fragmentation in service provision.

## 2.5 URBACT Local Group ULG

### *Stakeholders and Partners*

The URBACT Local Group (ULG) has been established to bring together a broad and representative range of stakeholders working with and for young people across the Dublin 10 (Cherry Orchard Ballyfermot) area. The intention is to ensure that the project is informed by diverse perspectives, grounded in local realities, and supported by those directly involved in youth services, community development, and frontline delivery.

Stakeholders were identified and engaged based on their role in supporting young people across key systems, including youth work, education, community safety, family support, and employment pathways. This includes Youth Services, Garda Youth Diversion Projects, Child and Family Services, Community Gardaí, and youth employment and education providers.

A core principle of the ULG is that young people are not only participants, but active co-designers and contributors to governance. Their involvement is central to shaping priorities, testing actions, and influencing decision-making throughout the project.



**The current ULG includes:**

- Local Youth Services – Familibase, Ballyfermot Youth Service, Cherry Orchard Youth Service
- Ballyfermot College of Further Education
- Sláintecare Healthy Communities Local Development Officer
- Dublin City Council Community Development Team (Ballyfermot Area Office)
- Community Gardaí

**Two-Level ULG Approach (Local and National)**

To strengthen both local impact and system-wide influence, the project will operate through a two-level ULG structure:

- Local ULG (Place-Based Focus)**  
 The local ULG will oversee the implementation of the project within Dublin 10. It will support a place-based approach, working directly with young people to co-design and deliver testing actions such as the Youth Advisory Panel and participatory budgeting. This group will ensure that actions are responsive to local needs, grounded in lived experience, and embedded within existing community structures.
- National ULG (Systems and Policy Influence)**  
 In parallel, a national-level ULG will be developed to connect local learning with broader policy and system change. This group will include representatives from relevant government departments, national agencies, and strategic partners. Its role will be to review insights emerging from the Dublin 10 pilot, identify systemic barriers, and support the translation of local learning into national policy and practice.

This dual structure ensures that the project is both deeply rooted in place and strategically positioned to influence wider systems, creating a clear pathway from local testing to national impact.

**3. Investment Plan**

This Investment Plan outlines a phased, adaptive approach to designing, testing, and embedding a youth-centred model within local government structures in Dublin City Council. Spanning December 2025 to December 2027, the approach is grounded in Human Learning Systems (HLS), prioritising relationships, learning, and continuous adaptation over fixed delivery.

Initial groundwork has already commenced, including the establishment of the URBACT Local Group (ULG) and the development of a Youth Advisory Panel, providing a strong foundation for implementation. The workplan is structured across three phases—Initiation, Testing Actions, and Embedding & Scaling—allowing for iterative learning, real-time reflection, and system-wide alignment through mechanisms such as Action Learning Sets (ALS). This ensures that local testing actions not only respond to the needs of young people in Dublin 10, but also contribute to sustainable organisational and policy change at city and national level.

**December 2025 – December 2027**

***Short to medium term plan- Proof of Concept***

Phases one focuses on testing the core components of a youth-centred approach within a defined local area (Dublin 10), generating evidence, learning, and momentum for wider implementation. This phase is designed to demonstrate the feasibility, value, and impact of embedding youth participation within local government structures, particularly for the 17–24 age group.

### ***Long term plan – Embedding Youth voice mechanism within Local Authority***

Phases two and three will build on the learnings from phases one and to develop an adaptable, scalable model that can be used through Dublin City Council and at a National Level.

### **3.1 Phase 1 –Part 1 - Initiation (months 1-3)**

During phase 1 the Project Leads, Joanna Kelly (Slainte Care) and Caroline Kelly (DCC Community Development Team), with the support and feedback from the ULG and YAP, will focus on establishing the core structures, relationships, and learning mechanisms required to inform a youth-centred approach. This phase lays the foundation for meaningful youth participation, ensuring that governance, engagement, and evidence systems are in place prior to testing actions.

- Establish expanded ULG with youth participation, ensuring representation across key stakeholders and local services
- Recruit and onboard Youth Advisory Panel facilitators to support engagement and co-design processes
- Engage with Dublin City Council Comhairle na nÓg coordinator to ensure alignment and avoid duplication of structures
- Meet with Area Office Manager and relevant DCC departments to secure local buy-in and operational alignment
- Map existing youth services and participation structures to identify gaps, overlaps, and opportunities for integration
- Develop a Youth Engagement Plan outlining how young people will be recruited, supported, and retained
- Conduct youth Journey Mapping workshops to understand lived experiences, service navigation, and key challenges
- Story capture and early communication activities to document youth experiences and build awareness
- Initiate co-design indicators workshops with young people and stakeholders to define what success looks like
- Launch Action Learning Sets (ALS) as a cross-government learning forum to support reflection and system alignment

Outputs of Phase 1 part 1 will include an established governance structure, engaged Youth Advisory Panel, baseline insights, and a clear framework for testing actions

### **3.2 Phase 1, Part 2 - Testing Actions (months 4-12)**

#### **Youth Advisory Panel**

The Youth Advisory Panel is a central testing action of this Investment Plan, providing a structured and ongoing mechanism for youth participation within local government. The panel will be co-designed with young people and supported by local stakeholders, providing a platform for young people- aged 17 – 24- to shape priorities, contribute to decision-making at a local level, and influence actions that impact on their wellbeing. It will act as a core governance structure within the pilot, ensuring that youth voice is embedded throughout the project lifecycle.



*Images 7 and 8, Youth Advisory Panel engage in team building and focus on key areas of interest.*

#### **Key actions for Project Leads include:**

- Formal launch of the Youth Advisory Panel, with clear purpose, structure, and role within the governance model
- Co-design of a Youth Charter, setting out values, priorities, and agreed decision-making pathways
- Establishment of regular (bi-weekly) meetings to ensure consistent engagement, continuity, and relationship-building
- Development of clear links between the Panel and Dublin City Council structures, ensuring input is formally recognised and acted upon
- Creation of a safe, inclusive, and youth-friendly environment that supports participation from diverse and underrepresented groups

**Role and impact:**

- Provides an ongoing structure for civic participation, consultation, and meaningful influence
- Enables young people to shape local policy, priorities, wellbeing actions, and resource allocation, including participatory budgeting
- Embeds youth voice directly into Dublin City Council planning and decision-making processes
- Strengthens young people's agency, confidence, and connection to their community and local governance systems
- Support and capacity building for participants, including facilitation, mentoring, and skills development
- Clear feedback loops, ensuring young people see how their input influences decisions ("you said, we did")



Image 9: Poster advertising first Youth Advisory Panel Meeting, Image 10: Call for Youth input on Community Development Plan for Ballyfermot Drimangh Area Office

**Participatory Budget:**



The Participatory Budget (PB) will act as a central testing action within the project, providing young people with a direct and meaningful role in decision-making and resource allocation at a local level. It moves beyond consultation, enabling young people to design, prioritise, and deliver projects that respond to their own identified needs and aspirations. The budget will enabling young people to directly influence the allocation of resources within their community. Through a structured, youth-led process—including idea generation, proposal development, and voting—young people will identify and select projects that respond to their needs. This testing action will demonstrate the practical application of youth-led decision-making and its impact on local outcomes.



*Image 11, Where will the money go in Dublin City.*

The PB process will be delivered in a structured, youth-led cycle. Designed and led by the Dublin City Council Sláintecare Local Development Officer in partnership with the Community Development Team, who have developed the model locally in collaboration with community and youth partners. Delivery will be supported by a trained youth participation facilitator who will work alongside the Youth Advisory Panel through each stage of the participatory budgeting process, including idea generation, proposal development, outreach, voting, project selection, implementation, and evaluation. The total cost for the Phase 1 pilot is €15,000, reflecting the additional investment required to design, test, facilitate, and evaluate the model. Subject to successful evaluation, the approach can be replicated across Dublin City Council's remaining Area Offices at an estimated €10,000 per Area Office, as the core methodology, resources, and learning from the pilot will already have been established.

- Confirm** **budget** **allocation**  
 A dedicated budget has been secured and ring-fenced for the pilot, ensuring that young people have real influence over tangible resources. Clear parameters and criteria will be established in collaboration with Dublin City Council to support transparency and accountability.
- Youth-led** **idea** **generation**  
 Through workshops, outreach sessions, and engagement activities, young people will be supported to identify key priorities and generate project ideas. This stage will focus on

inclusivity, ensuring participation from a diverse range of young people, particularly those who are often underrepresented.

- **Proposal development**  
 Selected ideas will be developed into structured proposals with support from facilitators and stakeholders. Young people will be guided through practical elements such as feasibility, budgeting, planning, and impact, building skills in leadership, teamwork, and project design.
- **Outreach and awareness campaign**  
 A targeted communication campaign will be implemented to raise awareness of the PB process and encourage broad participation. This will include youth-led promotion through schools, youth services, social media, and community networks to maximise engagement and visibility.
- **Youth voting event**  
 A transparent and accessible voting process will be delivered, enabling young people across the area to select the projects they wish to see implemented. This may include both in-person and digital voting options to ensure inclusivity.
- **Selection and announcement of winning project(s)**  
 Winning project(s) will be formally announced, reinforcing visibility and accountability. Young people involved in the process will be recognised for their contribution, strengthening ownership and trust in the process.
- **Implementation and delivery**  
 The selected project(s) will be delivered with the continued involvement of young people, supported by Dublin City Council and partners. This ensures that participation extends beyond decision-making into real-world delivery and impact.



Image 12: Ideas and areas of focus generated from the Youth Advisory Panel

## Capacity building for Local Authority Staff:

Targeted training and support will be provided to local authority staff within the pilot area to strengthen understanding and practice of youth participation. This will focus on building skills in relational working, co-design, and youth engagement, ensuring that staff are equipped to embed youth-centred approaches within their day-to-day roles. The training has already been developed and rolled out within youth organisations nationally but not within Local Authorities specifically. It is available via an e-learning platform through Hub na nOg – the national centre of excellence and coordination in children and young people's participation in decision making. This is a critical step in moving from project-based participation to sustained organisational change.

## Systems learning

A core principle of this Investment Plan is that learning is continuous, shared, and actively used to inform decision-making. Rather than operating as a fixed programme, the project adopts a Human Learning Systems (HLS) approach, where insights emerging from practice are regularly reflected upon, tested, and used to shape ongoing actions and wider system change.



- Reflection and learning loops**  
 Structured reflection sessions will take place on a quarterly basis, bringing together key stakeholders, including youth participants, ULG members, and delivery partners. These sessions will provide space to review progress, explore what is working well, identify challenges, and adapt actions in real time. This iterative approach ensures that the project remains responsive to the needs and experiences of young people, while continuously improving delivery.
- Story capture integrated into all activities**  
 Story capture will be embedded across all phases of the project, documenting the lived experiences of young people and stakeholders as they engage with the process. These narratives will provide rich qualitative insights into changes in wellbeing, belonging, agency, and system interaction. By capturing stories alongside data, the project builds a more complete and human understanding of impact, helping to influence both practice and policy.
- ALS updates and system alignment**  
 Insights and learning generated through local testing actions will be fed into Action Learning Sets (ALS), supported by the Department of the Taoiseach. ALS will act as a mechanism for sharing learning across government departments and sectors, identifying systemic barriers, and supporting coordinated responses. This ensures that learning from Dublin 10 is not isolated but contributes to broader system alignment and informs policy development at a national level.

### 3.3 Phase 2 and 3- Embedding and Scaling (Months 12+)

Building on the learning from Phases 1 and 2, the project will focus on strengthening and expanding youth-centred practice across Dublin City Council. Phase 3 focuses on consolidating learning from the testing actions and transitioning from pilot activity to sustainable, system-level change. This phase will ensure that the youth-centred approach is not a one-off initiative, but becomes embedded within the structures, processes, and culture of local government.

- Implementation of winning participatory budget project**  
 The project(s) selected through the Participatory Budget process will be implemented with continued involvement from young people, supported by Slaintecare Local Development Officer, Dublin City Council Community Development Team and key stakeholders. This stage will demonstrate the tangible impact of youth-led decision-making, strengthening trust, ownership, and confidence among participants. It will also provide practical insights into delivery, partnership working, and resource allocation within a youth-led model.
- Integration of indicators into monitoring systems**  
 Co-designed indicators developed during earlier phases will be embedded into ongoing monitoring and evaluation frameworks. This will ensure that youth wellbeing, participation, and system change are measured in a meaningful and consistent way. Both quantitative data and qualitative insights (including story capture and journey mapping) will be used to assess impact, inform decision-making, and support continuous improvement.
- Embedding a youth focus within existing Community Development Teams**  
 Roll out youth participation training across all DCC Community Development Teams so that

youth participation becomes a core consideration within existing Community Development structures across all five Dublin City Council area offices. Rather than creating parallel systems, this element will work to integrate youth-centred approaches into current roles, processes, and service delivery, with a particular focus on addressing the current gap for those aged 17–24.

- **Development of a city-wide youth governance model**  
Building on the learning from Dublin 10, a transferable and scalable model for youth-centred governance will be developed for application across Dublin City Council. This will include clear structures, roles, processes, and engagement mechanisms to support sustained youth participation—particularly for the 17–24 age group. The model will outline how youth voice can be embedded across all relevant functions, including community development, housing, sport, public realm, and service planning.
- **Sharing learning and influencing organisational decision-making**  
The city –wide governance model, including findings and insights from the testing actions—the work of the Youth Advisory Panel and outcomes of the Participatory Budget—will be formally presented to senior leadership within Dublin City Council, including the Executive Manager and Senior Executive Officer for Community and Social Development.

This engagement will support organisational buy-in, inform future planning, and build the case for resourcing and embedding a dedicated youth-centred function within the Council.

Learning from the pilot will be shared through Action Learning Sets (ALS) and the national ULG, supporting alignment with national policy and identifying pathways for wider adoption. This positions Dublin to scale the approach beyond a single area, contributing to long-term system change at both city and national levels.

### 3.4 Governance

Overall governance of this Investment Plan sits with Dublin City Council through the Sláintecare Local Development Officer and the Community Development Team, who have led the development of the concept and testing actions and are responsible for delivery, oversight, and alignment with local authority priorities.

At a **local level**, governance is delivered through a collaborative structure that includes:

- Sláintecare Local Development Officer
- Dublin City Council Community Development Team
- URBACT Local Group (ULG)
- Youth Advisory Panel

This structure ensures that implementation is both operationally grounded and informed by local expertise. The URBACT Local Group plays a key role in supporting engagement with young people, drawing on the experience of youth services and community partners who work directly on the ground. Importantly, the Youth Advisory Panel is established as an independent structure, separate from existing youth services, to ensure that youth voice is authentic, representative, and not filtered through service provision systems. Young people will actively contribute to shaping priorities, decisions, and local actions.

At a **National level**, governance will evolve following the pilot phase to support system-wide learning and policy influence. This will include:

- Sláintecare Local Development Officer
- Dublin City Council Community Development Team
- Youth Advisory Panel
- Action Learning Sets (ALS) Cross-Government Committee
- Academic partners
- Elected members (Councillors), where appropriate

This expanded structure ensures that learning from the Dublin 10 pilot is connected to national policy and decision-making processes. The ALS mechanism, supported by the Department of the Taoiseach, provides a formal route for cross-government engagement, while academic partners support evidence generation and evaluation. The inclusion of elected members strengthens democratic accountability and creates a pathway for local insights to influence broader governance structures.

Together, this multi-level governance model ensures strong leadership, meaningful youth participation, and a clear connection between local action and national system change.

### 3.5 Barriers & Risks

The delivery of this Investment Plan is supported by a proactive approach to risk management, recognising both operational and systemic challenges that may arise. The following outlines key risks identified through stakeholder engagement and early testing actions, alongside mitigation measures designed to ensure continuity, adaptability, and successful implementation.

**Risk Analysis Table**

| Category       | Description                                          | Likelihood | Impact | Prevention                                     | Mitigation                                   |
|----------------|------------------------------------------------------|------------|--------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Administrative | Delays in project timeline due to internal processes | Low        | Low    | Advance planning & realistic timelines         | Flex timeline; redistribute tasks            |
| Administrative | Lack of shared purpose despite aligned strategy      | Medium     | Low    | Joint action planning                          | Refresh vision; clarify shared goals         |
| Financial      | Insufficient resources to deliver actions            | Medium     | High   | Secure co-funding early                        | Reprioritise essential actions               |
| Operational    | Low youth participation                              | High       | High   | Early relational engagement; youth ambassadors | Adapt formats; incentives; flexible delivery |

**Additional risks requiring attention:**

- **Youth Engagement Risk:** Competing life pressures leading to inconsistent involvement.
- **Burnout Risk:** Youth and staff capacity strain due to intensity of participatory processes.
- **Cross-Departmental Alignment Risk:** Conflicting priorities across city departments or national partners.
- **Policy Misalignment:** Testing action insights may not automatically translate to policy unless guided intentionally.
- **Community Trust:** Historical experiences may affect sustained youth/parent engagement.
- **Sustainability Risk:** Without structural embedding, Youth Council and PB could remain one-off pilots.

**Assets & Barriers**

Existing Strengths, Opportunities and System Challenges Identified Across the Pilot Area

| <b>Assets / Strengths</b>                                                                                 | <b>Barriers / Challenges</b>                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Strong existing community networks and youth service providers across Dublin 10                           | Dublin joined the URBACT network one year later than other partner cities, creating compressed timelines |
| Established Dublin City Council Community Development structures in local area offices                    |                                                                                                          |
| Existing Sláintecare Healthy Communities infrastructure and place-based approach                          | Lack of a dedicated youth-centred function within local government structures                            |
| Strong cross-sector relationships between DCC, youth services, community groups and stakeholders          | Limited formal participation pathways for young people aged 18–24                                        |
| Existing youth participation experience through structures such as Comhairle na nÓg                       | Fragmented systems across health, education, youth and community services                                |
| Support and engagement from local youth service delivery partners and Garda Youth Diversion Projects      | Historical mistrust and disengagement within some communities and groups                                 |
| Access to URBACT international learning and Human Learning Systems methodology                            | Competing pressures on young people impacting sustained engagement                                       |
| Emerging cross-government support through Action Learning Sets and Department of the Taoiseach engagement | Resource and staffing limitations within local government structures                                     |

|                                                                                              |                                                                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Strong policy alignment with Healthy Ireland, Sláintecare, CYPSC and National Youth Strategy | Difficulty embedding long-term relational approaches within traditional systems                       |
| Existing Youth Advisory Panel established and operational                                    | Need for organisational culture change across departments                                             |
| Strong local knowledge and lived experience informing the project                            | Risk that pilot learning may not translate into long-term structural change without sustained funding |
| Potential for scalability across all Dublin City Council areas and nationally                | Limited time and capacity to fully embed systems learning during pilot phase                          |

### 3.6 Funding and Resourcing

The financial approach to this Investment Plan is structured across 3 phases: Phase 1 short-term pilot delivery within the URBACT cycle, and Phase 2 Expansion to DCC area Offices Phase 3 Longer-term resourcing required to embed and scale a youth-centred model within local government structures.

#### Phase 1 - Short-Term (URBACT Cycle – Pilot Delivery)

The short-term phase focuses on testing and demonstrating the viability of a youth-centred approach within Dublin 10. Costs are designed to support participation, facilitation, and learning, rather than large-scale infrastructure investment.

#### Operational costs include:

- Youth Participation Panel (YAP) Facilitation and training
- Youth worker / youth specialist support (sessional basis)
- Participatory Budget design, delivery, voting, and communications
- Workshops and co-design activities
- Story capture and creative outputs
- Monitoring, evaluation, and co-designed indicators

The delivery of this phase will be supported through URBACT programme funding, enabling the implementation of testing actions and pilot activities. Additional in-kind support will be provided by Dublin City Council (DCCO and project partners.

| Item                                                                           | Description                                                                         | Estimated Cost (€) | Sources                                                                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| YAP Promotion, Recruitment, Story Capture, Communications and Creative Outputs | Social media campaigns, posters, local outreach, youth engagement, Media production | €500               | YAP members leading media production – Cost €250-URBACT Programme Funding, remainder DCC funding |

|                                                               |                                                                                                       |         |                                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Youth Worker/Specialist                                       | Youth Specialist to lead group facilitation and run targeted sessions                                 | €960    | €120 per session X 8 URBACT Programme Funding                                           |
| YAP meeting facilitation                                      | Refreshments, facilitation, materials                                                                 | €960    | €240 per quarter URBACT Programme Funding                                               |
| Participatory Budget                                          | Youth Participatory Budget                                                                            | €10,000 | URBACT Programme Funding                                                                |
| Monitoring, evaluation, story capture and youth engagement    | Meeting facilitation, storytelling, printing, media production, learning documents, reporting         | €700    | Includes refreshments, room booking, document production                                |
| Relational Practice Training and Youth Participation Training | Human Learning Systems (HLS) relational practice training and Youth Participation training for staff. | €450    | HLS training €450 - Youth Participation Training Free via TULSA Child and Family Agency |

### Estimated Total Phase 1 Pilot Cost; €13,570

### Phase 2 Expansion to DCC area Offices

Phase 2 focuses on embedding and expanding the youth-centred governance model across Dublin City Council following the initial pilot in Cherry Orchard Ballyfermot. This phase aims to strengthen organisational capacity, mainstream youth participation within local authority structures, and establish sustainable mechanisms such as Youth Advisory Panels and annual Participatory Budgets across all Dublin City Council area offices. Investment during this phase is focused on participation, training, engagement, communications, and the development of consistent youth-centred practise across the organisation.

### Phase 2 – Embedding and Scaling (Indicative Costings).

| Item                                                                           | Description                                                                                          | Estimated Annual Cost (€) | Sources                                                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| YAP Promotion, Recruitment, Story Capture, Communications and Creative Outputs | Social media campaigns, posters, local outreach, youth engagement, materials across all area offices | €2500                     | Approx. €500 per area office location – 5 Area Offices |
| Youth Participatory Budget Allocation                                          | Dedicated youth-led participatory budget                                                             | €50,000                   | €10,000 x 5 area offices                               |



|                                                               |                                                                                                 |        |                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                               | for each Dublin City Council area office.                                                       |        |                                                                       |
| YAP meeting and workshop facilitation                         | Refreshments, facilitation, materials, creative workshops                                       | €9000  | Approx. €1,800 per area office                                        |
| Relational Practice Training and Youth Participation training | Human Learning Systems relational practice training and Youth Participation training for staff. | €2,250 | €450 x 5 area offices                                                 |
| Communications & Awareness Campaigns                          | Public awareness, reports, digital communications, community engagement                         | €4,000 | City-wide awareness raising                                           |
| Administrative & Coordination Costs                           | Printing, meeting supports, governance supports                                                 | €3,000 | General operation costs across all areas                              |
| Monitoring, evaluation, story capture & Youth Engagement      | Meeting facilitation, storytelling, printing, media production, learning documents, reporting   | €3,500 | Supporting evidence gathering and scaling in all areas- €700 per area |

### Estimated Total Annual Phase 2 Cost; €74,250

### Phase 3 Long-Term (Embedding and Scaling Model)

Phase 3 focuses on long-term systems change and the scaling of the Dublin Model at both local government and national policy level. Building on the evidence and learning generated through the pilot and expansion phase, this stage aims to influence national policy, embed dedicated youth - centered approaches within local authorities, and strengthen national practice through education and professional development pathways. Investment at this stage reflects a shift from pilot delivery towards sustainable structural change, including dedicated staffing, national engagement, academic partnerships, and long-term government development.

Beyond the pilot phase, sustained investment will be required to embed a youth-centred approach as a core function of local government. This includes both staffing and system-level supports.

### Phase 3 – National Scaling and Systems Change (Indicative Costings).

| Item | Description | Estimated Annual Cost (€) | Sources |
|------|-------------|---------------------------|---------|
|------|-------------|---------------------------|---------|

|                                               |                                                                                                                                 |                              |                                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Development of National Proposal              | Preparation of national proof-of-concept proposal through County & City Management Association (CCMA) and Government engagement | Minimal / Existing Resources | Delivered through existing staffing structures                       |
| Third-Level Education Engagement              | Engagement with universities and education providers regarding Human Learning Systems / relational practice modules             | €10,000                      | Meetings, workshops, consultation and curriculum development support |
| National Awareness & Dissemination            | National conferences, presentations, learning events and policy dissemination                                                   | €15,000                      | Supports scaling policy influence                                    |
| Research Academic Support                     | Collaboration with academic institutions on evaluation and evidence development                                                 | €20,000                      | Supports national evidence base                                      |
| Dedicated Youth-centred Staff Pilot (9 areas) | One dedicated youth-focused staff member within five DCC area offices (Grade 6 equivalent)                                      | €350,000                     | Approx. €70,000 salary and associated costs x 5 staff                |
| Three-year Dedicated Staffing Pilot           | Three year pilot across 5 areas                                                                                                 | €1,050,000                   | Long-term systems change investment                                  |
| National Policy development                   | Cross-government engagement and consultation                                                                                    | €10,000                      | Policy development workshops and consultation                        |

### Phase 3 Totals (Based on 5 Area Offices)

- Estimated Phase 3 Total (excluding staffing pilot): €55,000
- Estimated Three-Year Dedicated Staffing Pilot Total (5 Area Offices): €1.05 million (€350,000 per annum x 3 years)
- Overall Indicative Phase 3 Investment: Approx. €1.105million

The majority of Phase 2 costs relate directly to participation and delivery, ensuring young people have meaningful opportunities to influence local decision-making.

While the non-staffing costs associated with Phase 3 remain relatively modest, the primary long-term investment relates to embedding dedicated youth-centred functions within local authority structures.

This reflects a strategic shift from project-based participation towards sustainable systems change and relational governance within local government.

**Potential funding sources.**

Funding will be drawn from a mix of local, national, and European sources, supporting both pilot delivery and long-term sustainability:

- European funding streams (including URBACT and future EU programmes)
- Healthy Ireland
- Sláintecare Healthy Communities
- Dublin City Council departmental budgets
- Office of the Taoiseach (via Action Learning Sets and cross-government initiatives)
- Department of Health, Department of Education, and other relevant national bodies

A blended funding model will be explored to ensure sustainability, with pilot learning used to build a strong case for longer-term investment.

The investment required at pilot stage is relatively low; however, the potential return is high, with the opportunity to fundamentally reshape how young people engage with and influence local government.

**3.7 Monitoring and Evaluation -**

Monitoring and evaluation will take place continuously over the three phases by using both qualitative and quantitative methods including learning loops, journey mapping, surveys, workshops, and interviews. Comprehensive reports will also be produced by the project leads at the end of each of the three phases to evaluate the effectiveness and constructive learning accrued from the plan.

Initial indicators (will be finalised via Co-Design Indicators Action):

- Number of youths participating in governance structures
- Frequency & quality of youth-led decisions
- Youth-reported belonging and agency to be decided via qualitative methods – interviews and quantitative – anonymous surveys
- Number of cross-department adaptations adopted
- PB cycle completion rate
- Number and quality of stories captured
- Evidence of policy shifts informed by testing actions

Monitoring will include:

- Co-designed Monitoring & Evaluation framework
- Reflection & Learning Loop sessions monthly

- ALS cross-government learning documentation

We hope this approach will allow us to narrate via multiple sources the importance of having a youth voice mechanism within local government and to demonstrate measurable outcomes that can be achieved when young people feel empowered and are given the opportunity to make a difference. Please see further details in tables below.

### Monitoring and Evaluation of Phase 1 – Establish and test a Youth-Centred Pilot Model in Dublin 10

#### Pilot completion date- February 2027

| Specific Objective                                                                                            | Result indicator                                         | Baseline (B)<br>Target (T)                                           | Output Indicators                                            | Monitoring Source                                                                                                                      | Frequency/Completion date                                                                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Establish a Youth Advisory Panel (YAP) in Cherry Orchard/ Ballyfermot using a Human Learning Systems approach | Number of young people engaged in YAP                    | B- No established YAP<br>T- YAP established with 15-20 members       | Satisfaction of Young people's engagement in the YAP process | Attendance taken at each meeting. Reflections, story capture, journey mapping, shared indicators recorded from learning loop workshops | Attendance – every meeting<br>Feedback – Learning loop workshops every fourth meeting (2 months)               |
| Implement a Youth Participatory Budgeting pilot (PB) in Dublin 10                                             | Number and quality of proposals for PB                   | B-No existing PB<br>T- PB implemented and spent on project/ projects | Success of implemented PB Project/ Projects                  | Completed proposals reviewed and evaluated by YAP and project leads. Public surveys and YAP consultation on impact of PB Project       | June 2026 proposals were reviewed and project decided.<br>February 2027 Survey completed and report finalized. |
| Build local authority staff capacity in youth participation                                                   | Number of staff trained in Youth Participation and Human | B- No staff trained<br>T – Two staff members in Pilot Area Trained   | Relevance of training to staff and feedback on how training  | Interview staff in relation to learnings from staff training                                                                           | Interview to take place January 2026,<br>Report February 2027                                                  |

|                                                                 |                                                                             |                                                             |                                                                                |                                                                |                                                                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| and relational practice                                         | Learning Systems                                                            |                                                             | is being implemented                                                           | and relevance to work                                          |                                                                    |
| Cross-departmental and local representative engagement with YAP | Number of cross department adaptations implemented by relevant stakeholders | B-No current engagement<br>T- 10-15 Adaptations implemented | Actions taken from viable Issues raised across departments and with local reps | Spreadsheet developed by Project Leads to track this progress  | On-going throughout pilot                                          |
| Develop evidence and learning from pilot                        | Frequency and quality of Youth-led decisions.                               | B- No Evidence<br>T-10 Youth led decisions implemented      | Evidence of success of PB project and youth decision making across departments | End of month reports on project submitted to Executive manager | Monthly reports submitted with final report on Pilot February 2027 |

#### Monitoring and scaling of Phase 2 - – Embed and Scale Across Dublin City Council

| Specific Objective                                                               | Result indicator                                                                                                                                        | Baseline (B)<br>Target (T)                                                                                      | Output Indicators                                                                  | Monitoring Source                                                                                                            | Frequency/Completion date                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Present findings and scaling proposal to DCC senior leadership and get agreement | Agreement to meeting/ presentation to showcase the success of pilot and propose expansion. Agreement in writing to support the expansion of the project | Baseline – Project agreed to be delivered in one area<br><br>Target – Project agreed to be delivered in 5 areas | Project successfully delivered in five areas with engagement from all stakeholders | Meeting minutes and written agreements from senior management and area management. Rollout monitored through monthly reports | Meeting/ presentation in quarter one of 2027<br><br>Rollout to begin Quarter two 2027<br><br>Reports monthly with final report end of year one |
| Expand Youth Advisory Panel model across all DCC Area Offices                    | YAP's set up in five DCC Area Offices                                                                                                                   | Baseline- YAP set up in one area<br>Target-YAP set up in five areas                                             | Satisfaction of Young people's engagement in the YAP process across areas          | Attendance recorded, Reflections, journey mapping and story capture recorded and report completed                            | Learning loops and reflections recorded quarterly at each YAP and End of Year Report completed                                                 |

|                                                                                |                                                                                             |                                                                              |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Secure recurring Youth Participatory Budget funding across Dublin City Council | Budget secured for 5 Area Offices in DCC following presentations at Area Committee meetings | Baseline – one budget secured<br>Target – five participatory budgets secured | Agreement from local representatives and area managers to allocation of €10,000 funding in each area | Written agreement of PB Allocation Rollout of PB monitored through feedback and reports completed by YAP, Leads and ULG. Public consultation on impact of PB Project via QR code survey | Success of presentations reported to project leads. At month 4 of starting project, proposals reviewed and project agreed. After 12months- Survey completed and reports from all areas finalized. |
| Embed youth-centred practice within local government structures                | Staff training in Youth Participation and HLS across five areas                             | Baseline – Staff trained in one area<br>Target – staff trained in five areas | Relevance of training to staff and feedback on how training is being implemented                     | Workshops with staff in relation to learnings from staff training and relevance to work                                                                                                 | Workshops to take place January 2028,<br><br>Report February 2028                                                                                                                                 |

### Monitoring and scaling of Phase 3 – National Scaling and Systems Change

| Specific Objective                                                                 | Result indicator                               | Baseline (B)<br>Target (T)                                    | Output Indicators                                                           | Monitoring Source                                                   | Frequency/Completion date  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Develop a national proposal through the CCMA for adoption across local authorities | National Proposal Developed                    | Baseline – No current Proposal<br>Target – Proposal completed | Present scalable model to the County and City Management Association (CCMA) | Lead Partners insure proposal completion and review by National ULG | January 2029               |
| Influence national policy and Programme for                                        | Develop proposal for a dedicated youth-centred | Baseline – No proposal for youth centered approach            | Proposal included in programme for Government                               | Lead Partners ensure proposal completion and review by              | January 2029- January 2030 |

|                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                |                                                                                    |                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Government commitments                                                       | approach within all local authorities nationally                                                                                                 | Target-proposal completed                                                                                                                       |                                                                                | National ULG, monitor local parties programme for government                       |                           |
| Promote Human Learning Systems within education and professional development | Engage third-level institutions regarding inclusion of Human Learning Systems modules within social science and community development programmes | Baseline – HSL not currently embedded in education systems<br>Target – HSL included in third level Community development and youth work courses | HLS explored or adopted within education and training pathways                 | Project leads, Academic partners and national ULG to report on this                | January 2029-January 2030 |
| Establish long-term government-supported youth-centred local authority model | Secure commitment for dedicated youth-centred functions within local authorities nationally                                                      | Baseline – Youth centered functions in one DCC area<br>Target – Youth Centered functions within Nationwide local authorities                    | Sustainable, government-funded youth-centred structures established nationally | Project leads, National Government and Local Authorities to monitor implementation | January 2029 onwards      |

## Conclusion

The URBACT WISH Cities journey has provided Dublin City Council with an opportunity to move beyond traditional approaches to youth participation and reimagine how local government can work alongside young people to improve wellbeing. At the outset of this project, Dublin recognised a significant gap within its local governance structures. While there were many strong policies, committed services, and existing participation mechanisms for those under 18, there was no structured pathway for young people aged 17–24 to influence decisions that shape their communities. Rather than beginning with predefined solutions, Dublin embraced the Human Learning Systems approach, focusing on relationships, curiosity, and learning from lived experience.

Throughout the transfer journey, three key learnings have emerged. Firstly, meaningful youth participation must be embedded, not occasional. Young people want genuine opportunities to



shape decisions, not simply be consulted after decisions have already been made. Secondly, relationships are the foundation of systems change. Lasting improvements come from creating trusted spaces where young people, communities, local government, and partner organisations can learn together, test ideas, and adapt continuously. Finally, international learning is most powerful when adapted to local context. Dublin has drawn inspiration from Milan's WISH-M model and the wider URBACT network, but has shaped an approach that reflects the realities, strengths, and governance structures of Dublin City Council.

What began as an exploration of how to strengthen youth wellbeing has evolved into a practical roadmap for embedding a youth-centred approach within local government. The establishment of the URBACT Local Group, the creation of the Youth Advisory Panel, the introduction of participatory budgeting, and the integration of Human Learning Systems principles demonstrate how local authorities can shift from delivering services *for* young people to designing services *with* young people. These testing actions provide not only immediate benefits for young people in Dublin 10 but also generate valuable evidence for wider organisational and national change.

Looking ahead, Dublin's ambition extends beyond this Investment Plan. The vision is to create a sustainable model where youth voice is embedded across all Dublin City Council Area Offices, informing local decision-making as a normal part of governance rather than a standalone initiative. Through continued learning, partnership, and investment, Dublin believes that this model has the potential to influence local government practice across Ireland. The greatest legacy of Dublin's participation in URBACT WISH Cities is not simply a new project, but a new way of working—one that places relationships, participation, and learning at the heart of creating healthier, more inclusive, and more responsive cities for future generations.