

Examine the development of one urban area in any Irish region you have studied.

(30 marks)

Answer

In this answer I will discuss the development of Dublin city. Dublin city has developed from a small Viking settlement in the 9th century where the Vikings established Dublin as a small trading town on the south banks of the river Liffey. In the 13th century the Normans took over Dublin and went on to fortify the city building Dublin castle, which later became the centre of British administration. Dublin continued to develop as an important trading city as seen with the Customs House built on the north banks of the river Liffey.

During the 1950's, Dublin city experienced rapid development. The availability of employment within the city, particularly around the Dublin docklands, resulted in huge levels of rural to urban migration for employment. Dublin continued to attract industry as cheap employment for companies was available and consequently population continued to grow in the 1970s. Residential areas were needed for this new work force, with the construction of a range of housing development, under the directorship of Herbert Simms. Some of these developments can still be seen, for example Pearse House on Townsend street. In an attempt to control urban sprawl, new towns were developed on the outskirts of the city including Blanchardstown and Tallaght. These new towns accommodated the overspill of population from Dublin city; however, Dublin continued to grow into the 21st century and these towns were engulfed by the sprawling city. Ireland's current population stands at 4,857,000 (2018). On top of this, for the first time since 2009, there was net inward migration of Irish Nationals returning home after the recession, adding to the employment sector, and contributing to the current demand in the housing market in the Dublin region. This had been compounded in Dublin's development with the rise in non-nationals entering the workforce, now making 12.2% of the Irish population, with Polish making up the largest individual group of migrants (33,500 in County Dublin, 2018)

Multi-national companies have been attracted to Dublin, locating on the edge of the city due to the good transport infrastructure. This further encouraged the growth of Dublin city. Dublin's boundaries now extend as far as Meath and Kildare. The increase in commuters has put pressure on transport infrastructure in the city with peak travel times increasing as noted. Planners have attempted to tackle these problems by upgrading the M50 Motorway to six lanes, the extension of Dart services as currently proposed into North county Dublin to Drogheda and west to Maynooth (Transport 2040), designated bus corridors (QBC's), the extension of the LUAS and the building of Port tunnel, but as it stands the busiest intersection in the country's road network is still found at the M7/ M50 intersection.

As Dublin continues to develop it must look to resolve her housing issues as a recent report (The Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland 2020) found that the cheapest two-bed apartment currently available in Dublin had a sales price of €375,000, requiring the buyer to have an annual income of at least €96,000, above a couple's average Irish income of €88,000 between them. Infrastructurally, Dublin's water supply issues do seem to have a

possible solution with the planned 170km pipeline from the Shannon river getting the go-ahead.

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