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*Representing: Blanchardstown-Castleknock-Clonsilla-Mulhuddart*

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Chairperson: **K.O'Neill** Vice Chair: **B.Crawley** Secretary: **C.Durnin** Treasurer: **L.Gibson** PRO:**C. Kurtz.**

Mr. Senan Turnbull  
Director of Services  
The Community, Culture and Sports Department  
Fingal County Council  
County Hall  
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A Chara

On behalf of DUBLIN 15 COMMUNITY COUNCIL I wish to make the following observations on the proposed development of sporting facilities in Dublin 15.

We note the public notice in some of the local papers that Fingal County Council has a significant budget for the provision of community facilities over the next 3 years. We believe that this funding should be largely focused on addressing infrastructure gaps in the Dublin 15 area.

The infrastructure gaps have occurred in Dublin 15 over the last 20 years as a result of the rapid development of the Greater Blanchardstown Area, where the provision of community centers and sporting facilities has not kept pace with the development of new communities in residential areas.

### **1.0 Sporting infrastructure deficit in Dublin 15 area.**

We would like to draw attention to The Fingal Sports Strategy 2003-2007 published by the Fingal Sports Partnership (Fingal County Council, the County Dublin VEC and the Campus Stadium Ireland). The report states (page 10):

*The largest single issue highlighted by sports clubs across Fingal was the access to, availability of, or the complete lack of facilities available to them to provide for their sport. The range of difficulties relating to facilities and grounds varied from security and safety of premises to lack of changing facilities or parking to unavailability of the desired facilities at appropriate times.*

*The situation relating to facilities is outlined in greater detail by the Collier & Broderick study. In some parts of the county there are proportionately less facilities per capita (this will be exacerbated by projected population growth) than in older longer established communities. **This is the case in many parts of Dublin 15.** While particular attention*

*needs to be directed at these areas there are also needs in all of the areas across the county. The Collier & Broderick (p.21, 2002) study illustrates that 3 areas (Blanchardstown, Castleknock and Swords) with the greatest growth in population between 1996 and 2002 are now the most deprived in terms of facilities compared with other parts of the county.”*

Chapter 3 page 17 *“In Dublin 15 (greater Blanchardstown and Castleknock) which has 75,000 people and is expected to grow to 100,000 by the end of the decade there very few sports clubs proportionally when compared to the rest of the county. Map 1 illustrates this as there is a higher proportion of sports clubs with their own facilities along the coastal areas and in Swords.*

Note: It should be noted that since that report was published, that the projected population for Dublin 15 is likely to exceed 130,000 when the development here ‘tops out’.

When we talk of disadvantaged areas, the Castleknock, Castaheany and Swords areas are not areas that are associated with disadvantage. In the past clubs in similar areas would have fund raised to acquire playing fields, facilities etc – all at a largely affordable cost.

The issue that make it very difficult for sporting organizations on their own to provide facilities is the cost of acquiring lands. The situation arises due to speculative pressure on land in proximity to residentially zoned land in the Dublin 15 area which has made it virtually impossible for clubs to purchase their own lands. This situation was exacerbated by the Council itself due to its introduction of the replacement class one provision for open space introduced in the current County Development Plan.

In addressing the disadvantage detailed in “Fingal Sports Strategy 2003-2007“ experienced by Dublin 15 and Swords area, we believe that the majority of the funding should be focused in these two areas rather than evenly distributed across the county as we have had to bear the impacts arising from the extraordinary level of development burden that has been placed on this and the Swords area.

## **2.0 Land usage in Dublin 15**

The Dublin 15 area is the largest conurbation in Fingal County. It is a satellite city within the Dublin Metropolitan Area, separated by strategic green belts from Finglas to the East (Scribblestown & Dunsink), Phoenix Park to the South East and from Lucan to the South (Liffey valley).

Playing fields are either in private ownership (e.g. the Garda sports grounds in Westmanstown) or in public ownership - lands that are transferred to Fingal County Council as a result of Class 1 public open space contributions arising from permissions granted for residential developments.

The rapid increase in the value of land in the Dublin area, and the changes in land zoning policies and objectives has effectively meant that new clubs/associations starting in these key residential development zones are effectively priced out of the market with regard to the acquisition of facilities. As a consequence these new communities have as such been effectively ‘blighted’ by the development process.

The Dublin 15 Community Council has lobbied consistently over the years for the protection of the Green Belts surrounding the Greater Blanchardstown area. The location of sporting facilities within the green belt lands is viewed as an acceptable and sustainable land use for this zoning. We have also held that Sustainable Development requires that the authorities have a duty to provide the appropriate level of support to newly emerging communities to help them establish and sustain their communities.

The community council supports sustainable access to sporting facilities on class 1 public open space within the residential areas. It has expressed its concerns on several occasions with locating Class 1 public open space remote from residential areas, and believes where possible the class 1 public open space should be within the residential areas.

If we are to address the disadvantage experienced by residents in Dublin 15 as detailed in the “Fingal Sports Strategy 2003-2007 “, additional sports facilities need to be provided in the green belt lands adjacent and accessible from residential areas.

### **3.0 Community infrastructure deficit in Dublin 15 area.**

#### **Lack of facilities in the Dublin 15 area**

The growing areas of Dublin 15 (Diswellstown, Castaheany, Ongar, etc.) are generally without community facilities. In addition to the difficulty in establishing these facilities, there are the ongoing problems and costs associated with keeping the facilities open.

The provision of community facilities is being imaginatively addressed by Fingal County Council in combining the design of new schools with community centres where the facility is planned to be available to the wider community in the evenings (Mary Mother of Hope – Littlepace and St Patrick’s - Diswellstown). This is a welcome development.

However not all community activities take place in the evening, (Parent & Toddler, Active Retirement, Second chance education). Where possible the pavilions of new sporting facilities should be available to community groups at reasonable cost.

#### **4.0 Application by Castleknock Hurling & Football club for new grounds.**

The difficulties faced by clubs trying to provide access to sport in the newly developing areas is illustrated by the Castleknock Hurling & Football Club. The club was established in 1998 and has approximately 800 members; it has 1 Senior & 1 Juvenile pitch and a co-share arrangement of an adjacent pitch at Porterstown Park.

The development potential of the club to support it’s catchment area ([the general area bounded by the Clonsilla Road, Coolmine Road, Roselawn Road, Porterstown extending to the M50 boundary](#)) is limited by access to playing facilities.

In addressing this specific example consideration should be given to the provision of complementary sporting facilities clustered together and integrated with community facilities to ensure that it facilitates economic and efficient exploitation of the facilities. Access to the facilities should be sustainable (i.e. within reasonable walking distance).

The Dublin 15 Community Council supports a multi use sports facility in Diswellstown, and recommends that Fingal County Council explore the possibility of acquiring the lands to the west of the M50 Toll Plaza(believed to belong to NTR) and south of the Luttrellstown Road. These lands were the subject of a proposed Auction approx. 4 months ago, but were not sold.

Yours sincerely,

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Kieran O'Neill  
Chairperson  
Dublin 15 Community Council