



Dublin 15

Community Council

CLONSILLA HALL, CLONSILLA ROAD, CLONSILLA, DUBLIN 15

E-mail: d15comcoun@eircom.net

Web site: www.dublin15cc.com

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

St Brigid's Community Centre Blanchardstown

Tuesday 10th November 2009

Annual Report

1. Identity

As part of its strategic plan, the community council sponsored a competition to develop a new logo. We had over 50 entries and selected the winning logo which is now in use.

2. Transport.

As part of our strategic lobbying to improve bus speeds on the key commuter routes to the city centre the community council made a submission on the Draft Conservation Management Plan for Phoenix Park.

- To reduce the environmental impact of traffic travelling through The Phoenix Park by encouraging a significant number of Dublin buses on route # 37 & # 39 to travel through the Phoenix Park from Castleknock / Ashtown Gate to Parkgate Street.
- Consider reducing unnecessary traffic from the Park, by encouraging peak time commuters to switch to public transport and working with Dublin Bus to provide route(s) through the Phoenix Park. Investigate introducing a bus gate on roads that are currently closed which improves journey times and provides a positive encouragement for a modal shift to public transport.
- Complete a full circuit of cycle trails and footpaths to allow families and young people in particular to cycle and walk safely throughout the Park. A particular feature of this should be linkages to external cycle routes and leisure trails. Agree with Fingal County Council and Dublin City Council safe routes for cyclists that separate them from general road users and eliminate risks to cyclists from other road users
- Track number of cyclists using Phoenix Park to commute to work, evaluate capacity of cycle routes and encourage an increase in cyclist journeys by ensuring cycleway capacity stays ahead of demand.

At the same time this plan was on display, The OPW applied to Dublin City Council for permission to upgrade Chesterfield Ave to a QBC. This was appealed by the Navan Road community Council. In deciding not to accept the Inspector's recommendation to grant permission, the Board decided to refuse permission by a majority of 6:2.

This definitive decision kills off our campaign to open up Chesterfield Ave to buses.

3. Planning.

Given the composition of the council and current economic climate, it is likely that little if any land will be rezoned for new residential. Our focus was on the catch up of infrastructure for Dublin 15

One of the most common criticism of living in new estates / areas is that the houses go in first, followed by the apartments and everything else (shops, schools, public open spaces, playing fields and public transport) lags by years if not decades.

The cumulative effect of this on a rapidly expanding area like Dublin 15 area over the past 10 years is unsustainable. The presence of large areas of residentially zoned land meant that the planners were unable to curtail the pace of development to match the provision of infrastructure, leading to major problems for the residents of Dublin 15.

We illustrated this by taking examples of the provision of schools, shops and petrol stations. The common theme is the poor quality of previous planning decisions in predicting and reserving sites for these facilities

A significant amount of time was spent in developing a submission, involving research on comparative price levels for fuel to demonstrate the economic effect of the failure of infrastructure to keep up with development.

We also used our research on the provision of school places to illustrate the infrastructure gap that needs to be addressed in the short to medium term.

4. Schools.

Our previous reports have demonstrated the chronic lack of provision of school sites for Dublin 15. In July 2007 we took the opportunity to send in submissions to the OECD Review of the Irish Public Service. We focused on the clear disconnect between the Department of Education and Science and the Local Authority in the planning and provision of school places. Drawing attention to:

- No clear accountability in who is responsible for the analysis of school demand and the reservation of school sites at earliest opportunity.
- No evidence of the evaluation of supply and demand for school places in decision making on land use planning and land re-zoning decisions.
- Freedom of Information request to both the Department of Education and Science and the local authority did not reveal a scientific approach to quantifying demand for school places.
- While it is difficult to predict with certainty primary school demand (as children enrolment aged 4 and censuses take place at 5 year intervals), the primary school enrolment data and the 8 year cycle provide early warning of demand at post primary level.
- Congestion and long commuting durations in greater Dublin area mean that provision of education should be provided locally.

In the context of scarce resources and a prediction that 100,000 additional places (from 487,000 at present) would be required nationwide some policy changes occurred.

- New schools advisory board disbanded, with a Commission on School Accommodation to develop new procedures for recognising new schools.
- No new primary schools, except in rapidly growing areas.
- Focus of schools building budget moves from the consolidation of small schools to rapidly growing areas.

The Commission on School Accommodation invited public consultation on the *Review of the Process for Recognising new Primary Schools*. Based on the problems experienced in Dublin 15, a comprehensive 18 page document was submitted. The key issues we raised were:

- We have supported the establishment of a wide diversity of new schools in the past.
- New school planning should be integral with Local Authority development plans, not added on in an emergency mode when the crisis emerges. Sites should be ring fenced so that they can be acquired at reasonable value.
- Establishing new schools should be based on an assessment of the needs of the area. Relevant patron bodies then invited to submit proposals on how they would best meet the needs of the area. There should be public consultation within the catchment area before a decision is made on which patron is invited to run the schools.
- The new school planning should address and integrate primary with post primary needs. An educational infrastructure plan for an area should be developed with 1 community school or college planned as the destination for several diverse primary schools.
- Schools must play a key role as Ireland tries to avoid the failures of assimilation (in which the migrant is expected to give up their values, customs and traditions) and multiculturalism (autonomy of each culture and the commonality of none) by pursuing an “Intercultural” approach.
- We are concerned at the social impact of the emergence of schools catering exclusively for the children of foreign born parents and or native Irish catholic children. Appropriate legislative and policy responses are required to prevent social fragmentation, and ghettoisation, becoming established and entrenched.
- School enrolment policies; at minimum, schools need to be more aware of the consequences of enrolment policy and practice beyond the confines of their own school, if more social fragmentation and ghettoisation are to be avoided.
- We request the review group to evaluate these enrolment policies and where necessary recommend changes to ensure new and existing schools support integration of newcomer children and avoid ghettoisation.

5. Anti social behaviour in private properties.

A significant problem for residents associations is dealing with anti social behaviour in private properties (both in private and local authority estates).

The opportunity arose with the public consultation on the Review of the Residential Tenancies Act 2004. The community council prepared a 14 page submission detailing the problems experienced by residents associations and the real difficulties in getting the landlords to address anti social behaviour.

Issues raised were:

- Refusal of tenants to maintain gardens
- Properties allowed to deteriorate with little or no external maintenance.
- Anti-social activity ranging from aggressive behaviour to neighbours to loud late night parties to serious issues of intravenous drug abuse and dealing
- Very difficult for neighbours to complain due to landlords being unregistered and un-contactable
- Residents are afraid to report anti-social behaviour in their areas because they are afraid that they will be targeted and intimidated.

We compared the inadequate PRTB process with that of Fingal County Council's housing Dept. We made many specific recommendations and proposals to address this problem in an effective manner.