

# **DUBLIN 15 COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

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Representing: Blanchardstown-Castleknock-Clonsilla-Mulhuddart

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The Dublin 15 Community Council was formed some years ago to provide an umbrella organisation for the many residents and voluntary community groups in the Dublin 15 area.

We are a committee of people from all areas of Dublin 15 all working voluntary and all working towards a common aim of lobbying for improved facilities for the residents of Dublin 15

Our main objective is the maintenance of strong representation to State and other Statutory Bodies in order that we may convey the consensus views of the Dublin 15 community in matters relating to,

- Planning and Development,
- Public Transport,
- Education,
- Recreational & Community Facilities,
- Infrastructure
- Environment,
- Crime Prevention,
- Job Creation & Tourist facilities.

The Dublin 15 Community Council welcomes all voluntary groups in the Dublin 15 postal district and provides an environment where all voluntary groups can help each other to make the Dublin 15 area a great place to live in.

## **Committee**

The committee meets 11 times this year, generally on the second Tuesday of each month. We initiated the formation of our Sub-committees, each dealing with a specific topic and reporting back to the executive at our monthly meetings.

## Web Site

The Dublin 15 Community Council re-launched it's web site this year with our own unique [www.dublin15cc.com](http://www.dublin15cc.com) web address. We want to communicate with the wider community by publishing information on the Community Council organisation and putting our submissions on the site.

## Meeting with Mr John Tierney

The Dublin 15 Community Council met with Mr. John Tierney shortly after he was appointed the new County Manager for Fingal. We discussed the provision of Community Facilities, Infrastructure, Roads, Transport, Noise Pollution, Air pollution, Education, and the handing over of school sites by the developers. The issue of street parking in Castleknock Village and our submission on a Building Design Guide was also mentioned. The meeting scheduled to last an hour at the most, went on for over 2 hrs. Everyone who attended the meeting felt that the New County Manager was very open and practical in his ideas and committed to delivering a quality service to the residents of Fingal.

## Planning & Development

### County Development Plan

#### Background

Every 4 or 5 years each Local Authority has to prepare a development plan, this defines how the county will develop, the zoning for all lands and a clear set of requirements for all new developments. This is a really important document for Dublin 15 and a huge amount of time and effort goes into lobbying on behalf of the residents of Dublin 15. The draft 2005-2011 plan was in the final stages at the start of the year.

Dublin 15 has grown at a very fast rate (from 40,000 to 90,000 between 1990 and present). The land in Dublin 15 was originally designated for a population of 100,000 people, with the current residential density guidelines; this is likely to reach 120,000 without any additional land zoned for residential use. The infrastructure has lagged development, Roads are saturated with private transport with congestion and no capacity to deal with planned increases in peak time commuting, the # 39 QBC is the worst performing route in QBC network (due to congestion and very limited bus lanes), no new bus routes, with very little improvement in rail service, no new secondary schools in last 10 years, and a crisis in primary education (example Castaheany Educate Together).

The existing situation will get worse with planning permission granted for very large scale developments in vicinity of rail stations (Pellettstown near Ashtown in the Dublin City Council area, Phoenix Park racecourse site with a new rail station near Auburn Ave, the Castlethorn's developments in Porterstown & Diswellstown with a new rail station between Coolmine & Clonsilla and the Hansfield SDZ with limited access to Clonsilla rail station. This development combined with the existing gross overcrowding on the Maynooth rail line and the lack of any approved plans to improve the service **is leading to unsustainable development and misery for Dublin 15 residents.**

The Dublin 15 Community Council took a decision to lobby for no re-zoning of new residential or industrial lands in Dublin 15 to provide breathing space to enable the infrastructure to catch up with the rapid expansion of recent years. We made a detailed submission in 2004 on the draft development plan and the plan was adopted in the first few weeks of 2005.

We lobbied all Fingal Councillors to pressure service providers by giving a clear message that no additional lands will be rezoned until the current problems are addressed and the infrastructure catches up with the existing and planned future developments.

We focused our lobbying on the following critical motions prior to the series of meetings that voted to adopt the Development Plan:

## **Proposal to rezone Green Belt lands (for residential) to the south of Dublin 15 - Blanchardstown South West**

### **1. Kellystown**

The proposal to re-zone Kellystown residential attacked a very important green belt between Blanchardstown and Liffey valley. There is **no** capacity on rail service to service additional zoned lands, proximity to rail line will mean very high density.

We recommend the manager's proposal (MA- 13.14, MA-13.16 & objective 364) be rejected and local Councillors ( P. Hamill, R. Coppinger & L. Varadkar ) proposals supported to return to existing green belt lands be supported.

We were successful in this, as the motions to re-zone Kellystown were overwhelmingly defeated (15 to 7 votes).

### **2. Barnhill**

At the time there were no plans in place to extend rail service into this area (and on to Dunboyne). Plans to upgrade Spenser Dock will take 3-5 years to implement. If funding is ever approved to extend the rail service to Dunboyne, there is ample time in 4 year development plan cycle for Fingal to respond to any future funded plans for this area. The Dublin 15 Community Council considered the Re-zoning proposal premature.

We agree with manager's proposal 13.2 to revert to greenbelt from new residential, and local Councillors ( P. Hamill, R. Coppinger L. Varadkar ) proposals that entire Barnhill site revert to existing green belt lands for the duration of this development plan.

Unfortunately this proposal was defeated (11 to 12 votes) and a substantial quantity of agriculturally zoned land was re-zoned for new development.

## **Proposal to rezone Green Belt lands (for residential) to the East of Dublin 15 - Scribblestown & Navan Road**

The proposal to re-zone attacks very important green belt between Blanchardstown and Finglas, this is the oldest green belt in Fingal and has been in existence for over 20 years. Previous council commissioned a planning study of the area which outlined development objectives consistent with the green belt zoning. There is **no** capacity on rail service to service proposals, with significant residential development taking place in Pelletstown in Dublin City Council adjacent area.

We agreed with manager's proposal to revert to greenbelt from SC, and **support** local councilors ( P. Hamill, M. O'Donovan, R. Coppinger & L. Varadkar) proposals that the site revert to existing green belt lands

We requested that the elected members **oppose** motions that conflict with the above and also propose extensive rezoning of the green belt between Blanchardstown and Finglas.

This was resolved by the Manager's proposal for a Study of the Dunsink Area:  
"That the area contained by the M50, N3, the boundary with the Dublin City Council administrative area, and the Cappagh Road as far as the M50 overbridge will be subject of a special study area to be undertaken by the Council. This study will use the land use zonings as designated in the 1999 County Development Plan and these zonings apply to the Draft County Development Plan 2005 – 2011 for this area.

Fingal County Council called for submissions on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2005, looking for ideas and inspiration about the future of this large and unique area. It contains an extraordinary range of natural, historical, cultural and recreational opportunities as well as some technical challenges due to access and landfill rehabilitation. It is nearly half the size of the Phoenix Park, much of it is in public ownership and it is located beside some of the most important transport links in the region. The community council made a detailed submission on recreational uses for these lands.

### **Scribblestown submission**

In our submissions into the study for lands at Dunsink and the Tolka Valley, we used the opportunity of including some burning issues of the community council (land zoning, lack of schools, playing pitches and children's playgrounds). We also suggested facilities for the teenage group - horses, skateboarding, adventure, etc and facilities for the elderly.

We proposed an interpretive centre based around the Dunsink Observatory, with a Science, Space & Planetary theme, an urban forest for former dump, an animal welfare centre. The security and access issues were also raised.

Our submission is published on our website.

## Hansfield SDZ Appeal

The SDZ site is approx. 82 hectares of largely greenfield lands. It is bounded by the recently built Ongar Road to the north, the Hansfield Road to the East, the Royal Canal towpath and the disused Navan Railway line to the south and the Barnhill Lucan Road to the west. The SDZ was appealed to An Bord Pleanala in 2003 by Dublin 15 community council.

Our primary objective was to link the SDZ to the delivery of a new rail line to Dunboyne, improved capacity on Maynooth line to take additional passengers and improvement in the QBC bus network. We were also concerned that the public open space was remote and 110kV line & pylons should be re-routed away from the development.

The developers also appealed the requirement to provide sites for primary & secondary schools.

At the oral hearing we asked An Bord Pleanala to amend the SDZ rather than reject it, and sought to align the interests of the landowners with the provision of transport infrastructure (by preventing development in the absence of infrastructure). This amended scheme was put on public display and the community council submitted many of its original concerns. The councillors agreed with our original concerns and amended the draft SDZ to link the phased development with the delivery of transport infrastructure, inserted the requirement to underground the 110 KV power lines, and made the scheme more attractive to future residents.

The Planning subcommittee attended meeting with Menolly Homes (Sheamus Ross), Town Planner (Douglas Hyde), where the Community Council was requested to withdraw their objection to the SDZ. Following a long discussion on this issue at a subsequent community council meeting it was agreed unanimously not to withdraw our objection.

An Bord Pleanala re-convened the oral hearing shortly after the launch by the government of the Transport 21 initiative. Dublin Bus, Irish Rail and the Department of Education & Science outlined their plans for the SDZ.

The developers withdrew their objections to the school sites but were opposed to the requirement to place the 110KV lines underground.

The community council attended and fully supported the modified SDZ. We also had the opportunity to cross examine Dublin Bus, Irish Rail and the Department of Education & Science on their plans for the SDZ and the ESB on their opposition to placing the 110kV power lines underground.

We expect a decision from An Bord Pleanala in the new year.

### **Submission - on housing scheme for Blanchardstown Village**

Fingal County Council put a scheme on display for the compulsory purchase of people's rear gardens near the Blanchardstown Community centre for sheltered housing. The original proposal was for sheltered housing for the elderly, but they withdrew this application and subsequently resubmitted a revised scheme is for 8-9 disabled/medical priority and 3-4 elderly.

We believed there had to be something other than an apartment to encourage people to move out of standard housing and free up 3 bedroom housing for families on the housing list.

We thought that the site on Church road Blanchardstown was ideal due to the proximity of church, the village with all it's facilities and the regular bingo for the elderly in St Brigid's Community Centre. These facilities were all part of the attractiveness of the site.

The Community Council unsuccessfully lobbied for 80% sheltered housing for elderly.

### **Liffey Valley submission**

The Office of Public Works commissioned a study by consultants Environmental Resource Management on a Liffey Valley Park, as part of the public consultations we made submissions on the extent of the park, it's management, access and car parking, integration with Fingal County Council's plan to restore the Anna Liffey Mills as a "Heritage Centre", the lack of a safe footpath along the road through the Strawberry Beds, the difficult for sporting organizations in Dublin 15 in obtaining access to playing pitches, opportunities for water based sports, opportunities for Tourism and potential for linkages to other amenity, recreational & cultural attractions in the greater Dublin area.

### **Heritage submission**

We submitted an observation on Fingal County Council's Draft Heritage Plan 2005-2010.

- Requesting a competition every 2 years in Fingal to recognize new and restored buildings of Architectural elegance, where members of the public nominate buildings they actually like.
- Requesting enforcement of protected structures in Fingal by ensuring any protected structure damaged by arson or neglect will have to be restored and maintained to original habitable condition prior to the grant of planning permission of new houses and a name & shame policy where vandalism, arson and constructive demolition of protected houses take place.

## **Community Development**

### **New community centre in Clonsilla**

The Dublin 15 Community Council was requested by the Church of Ireland parish to support the development of a new Parish and Community Centre at Clonsilla.

The Clonsilla area has seen significant and rapid development over the last 10 years where developers have built thousands of new homes in the Clonsilla area, in addition the Ongar developments have contributed to the general Clonsilla area growing at a the highest growth rate in the entire county. Alongside this growth there were relatively few meeting places in Clonsilla, with 1 large room in Clonsilla Hall and a smaller room in the adjacent Clonsilla Lodge.

The experience of the local community with the Church of Ireland community centre in Castleknock is very positive, with many local clubs and organisations that have no connection with the Church of Ireland parish accommodated. The Dublin 15 Community Council fully supported the Church of Ireland's plans for a Community Centre at Clonsilla and welcomed it's opening as a valuable resource for the entire local community.

### **Launch of new residents association**

The community council was invited to attend the start up meeting of one local residents association this year. We advised on the setting up and operation of a residents association and were delighted to welcome the newly formed residents association to the community council.

## **Roads**

### **We were represented at An Bord Pleanala's oral hearing on the proposed M50 Improvement Scheme (revised).**

We welcome the fact that the previous representations of the various stakeholders in the Dublin 15 area have been taken into account in drafting/designing the revised scheme.

- No compulsory acquisition of residential dwellings in the Dublin 15 area, the retention of the third lanes within the existing footprint of the M50 and the elimination of the toll booth facility.
- We requested the Bord to confirm the current layout and design of the N3 / M50 section of the scheme.

We drew attention to the following concerns:

- Air Quality concerns particularly in the slow moving/stationery locations through the Dublin 15 area, pose a threat to the health of nearby residents.
- Requested priority be given to the commencement and completion of the new access road from the N3 into the James Connolly Memorial Hospital

## **Upgrade of Roads to eliminate bottlenecks on the QBC**

Fingal County Council put the Clonsilla Road/ Coolmine Road junction improvement scheme on public display.

10 years ago the Clonsilla Road and Coolmine Road carried the burden of being the primary access for the greater Clonsilla area distributing traffic from Blanchardstown and Chapelizod. The situation placed an unbearable burden on the residents of Clonsilla Road and Coolmine Road. The Dublin 15 Community Council lobbied for the following relief measures

- A new bridge across the railway and Royal Canal now constructed as the Dr Troy Bridge to relieve traffic on the Coolmine Road
- A relief road for the Clonsilla Road, now constructed as the Ongar Road, and expected soon to be open as far as Hansfield.

Both of these measures resulted in the greater Clonsilla area traffic diverted away from the Clonsilla Road and Coolmine Road. As a result most of the traffic using these roads is now local traffic and the Number 39 QBC.

It is with great reluctance the Dublin 15 Community Council enters into conflict with local residents associations over the proposed Clonsilla Road/ Coolmine Road junction improvement scheme. The No 39 route is the only QBC we have to take people out of Dublin 15. Of all Dublin Bus's QBC routes the No 39 is the worst performing, with journey times increasing. The 2 major problems are the absence of bus corridors in the Dublin City Council area and the length of time it takes the bus to get out onto the N3.

- We proposed to route the bus through the Phoenix Park @ Ashtown to deal with the Dublin City Council problem.
- The only way to address the other problem is to look at all the bottlenecks in Dublin 15. This junction is one of them, and we think it is going to get a lot worse as the Porterstown Area Action Plan is constructed. There are other problem areas of course, and they need to be worked 1 by 1 in consultation with local residents

Unfortunately Fingal local Councillors took the decision not to proceed with the upgrade of the Coolmine Road. The result of this decision will be increased "rat run" traffic through Delwood and Glenville estates, as congestion at this junction increases.

We think it is time to look at the QBC network in Dublin 15 to see if there are better ways to serve existing and new communities in Dublin 15, as the current peak time journey from the terminus to the city centre of 1 hr and 40 minutes is just not acceptable.

## **Road safety issues.**

Of concern to us in relation to roads is the safe use of them by all road users. The Community Council is actively promoting safety issues on a regular basis with both the officials and councillors. Indeed some six years ago we suggested in a submission to Fingal and the Dept. of the Environment, the introduction of a special 30 K.P.H. speed limit for the area around schools, an initiative which has only recently been introduced by the Department.

### **Dublin City Council's proposals for Chapelizod**

Roads are an important element of our infrastructure and we monitor the planning, building and upgrade of the regions roads to ensure that we have an adequate hierarchy of roads to meet the demands of the various users in this area.

Over the past six weeks we made a number of strong representations to both Fingal and Dublin City Council regarding the City Council's recent proposal regarding the traffic problems of Chapelizod village. There has been a study published for the Dublin City Council, which amongst its recommendations is a number which would effectively mean the closing of Chapelizod to through traffic from Dublin 15. Any such move would have disastrous consequences for this area and the Community Council is intending to fight this issue at every opportunity.

### **Infrastructure - Health**

#### **Connolly Connelly Hospital Blanchardstown**

Management consultants were appointed to develop a report on the operation and future direction of Connolly Hospital Blanchardstown. As part of the community consultations the community council was interviewed and outlined the improvements in services needed to meet the healthcare needs of Dublin 15. The strategic development plan 2005-11 was later published.

The community council was represented at the retirement party for the Hospital General Manager Mr. Tom Gorey. Mr. Gorey has met the community council on many occasions to discuss community concerns, and allay our specific concerns that proposed healthcare reforms would result in a downgrading of the hospital status. His enthusiast leadership has resulted in enormous improvements to the hospital over the last 10 years, and we wish him well in his retirement.

#### **Mulhuddart Primary Health Centre**

The radio series the community council broadcast in the run up to the 2004 local elections included a program on primary healthcare. Our program revealed that there was no GP service in Mulhuddart, with people having to travel to Blanchardstown and Hartstown for GP services. Shortly after that program a report commissioned by the Primary Health Group Mulhuddart and funded by Combat Poverty Agency under Building Healthy Communities Programme documented the health care needs of the area and recommended the establishment of a Primary Healthcare centre. The community council supported the report, and we will continue to lobby for a Primary Health care centre which will meet the needs of the communities of Mulhuddart and Tyrellstown.

## Education

The Dublin 15 population has rapidly grown from a population of 40,000 in 1990 to in excess of 95,000 today. The last new Post primary schools to be built in Dublin 15 were Huntstown and Castleknock community colleges in 1995. Since that time the area has rapidly expanded and the community council became concerned that the educational infrastructure was not keeping pace with development.

The community council initiated a survey of all schools in the Dublin 15 area in 2003, the results showed that there were 8,294 pupils in primary schools and 4892 pupils in post primary schools. They also showed that the established primary schools were full and 3 new primary schools were established to cater with the booming population of children entering the primary school cycle, this has since increased to 5 new schools.

A statistic to note is that between the years 2000 and 2005, the total junior infant enrolment in the Dublin 15 area increased by 50%. Based on current enrolments, the community council forecasts that 2 new post primary schools are required to cater for children in our primary schools.

In November 2005 the Department of Education's evidence to the oral hearing of the Hansfield SDZ appeal stated that *"Late in 2004 School Planning Section carried out a study on future school requirements in the Dublin 15 area. This study identified the need for four new 24 classroom schools or provision to provide 96 new classes in total at primary level. At post primary level a need was identified for an **additional three new post primary schools** or provision to provide circa **4000 new places** at post primary level. This study was based on housing developments since 2002 and took account of additional units constructed as well as those under construction and those with outstanding planning permissions. The study did not take account of developments for which planning permission has not been granted and therefore did not include the Hansfield SDZ."*

The Hansfield SDZ appeal is still with An Bord Pleanala, with the landowners formally dropping their opposition to school sites in Hansfield it appears likely that 1 post primary school will be constructed on the site however the SDZ phasing states that this site does not have to be delivered until Phase 2, this is unlikely to come on stream until after 2015.

The population growth has occurred throughout Dublin 15, with large increases in the Littlepace – Ongar – Hansfield and the Diswellstown areas. This has caused a considerable strain on the educational infrastructure, with clear signs that there are not enough post primary school places.

1 new post primary school was approved in 2004 and the site in Phiblestown appears to be in the final stages of agreement between the Dept of Education and Mennolly Homes.

On the other hand the Diswellstown - Castleknock area remains without a clear plan to accommodate the growth in demand. The population increase has naturally resulted in increasing demands for school places with new primary schools established recently:

- ◆ St Patrick's NS (3 to 4 class per year with pupils entering post primary from 2009)
- ◆ Castleknock Educate Together (currently in start up, with 1 class per year and 2 class per year (60 pupils) entering post primary from 2007).
- ◆ St Mochta's expanding from 2 to 3 classes per year.

Currently there are ~ 1,100 students in Castleknock Community College, as children graduate from the new primary schools this will result in demand exceeded supply. Having discussed the issue, local residents, parents and teachers are opposed to increasing school size beyond the current capacity. Indeed it is felt by some that the school is already too large at 1,100 and operating beyond it's optimum pupil numbers

The community council responded to the emerging crisis by establishing a forum and facilitating a meeting between the parents associations of all primary schools in the Castleknock Community College catchment area. This Education Forum has had a series of meetings to build a consensus and agree a model of second post primary school that reflects the diversity of primary level schools in the area as well as the local population.

In parallel with the education forum we contacted the Fingal County Planners and local councillors regarding the sites, but were unsuccessful in getting a site reserved in the Development Plan. We raised the issue again in our submission on the lands in Scribblestown and in individual meetings with local public representatives.

**It is clear that there will be a crisis in post primary school places for the residents of Dublin 15 unless 2 new 1,000 place post primary schools are established immediately, and plans are made to increase places by an additional 2,000 in the near term.**

## Recreational facilities

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 centres and sporting facilities has not kept pace with the development of new residential areas.

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

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.*

In addressing the disadvantage experienced by Dublin 15 and Swords area, we believe that the funding should be targeted at these areas. 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 fundraised to acquire playing fields, facilities etc

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.

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.

## **Land usage in Dublin 15**

The Dublin 15 area is the largest conurbation in Fingal County. It is a satellite town 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 (i.e. the Garda sports grounds in Westmanstown) or in public ownership in lands that are transferred to Fingal County Council as a result of Class 1 public open space contributions as a result of residential development.

The rapid increase in the value of land in the Dublin area, and the changes in land zoning in the Dublin 15 area in the last 20 years have made it impossible for clubs to purchase land. This means that new clubs are solely reliant on Class 1 Public open space for playing facilities.

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.

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.

## **Toll Bridge lands**

The growing areas of Dublin 15 (i.e. Diswellstown, Castaheany, Ongar, etc.) are generally without community facilities. In addition to the difficulty in establishing these facilities, there is an ongoing difficulty and cost of 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.

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

The difficulty 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 its 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 they are maintained. Access to the facility should be sustainable (i.e. within reasonable walking distance).

Dublin 15 Community Council requested Fingal County Council to consider the site to the west of the M50 Toll Bridge and South of the Luttrellstown Road, in the ownership of NTR. These lands offer ease of access, safety and availability of public transport, and also satisfy the principles of sustainability now while meeting the demands of the future. We were delighted with the news that Fingal County Council purchased these lands.

### **Sports Campus Ireland**

Dublin 15 Community Council met with Sports Campus Ireland during the development of proposals for the Abbotstown site. There were no plans or maps on show as it had not yet gone to Cabinet.

Many of the community council's representations were taken into account in developing the plan with sensitive development around Abbotstown House, off peak local community access and a Regional Park idea incorporated on the site.

Phase 1 is expected to include the following Training Facilities for the GAA, FAI, and IRFU, this will include on site accommodation for the elite teams. A National Indoor training facility the size of 3 Basketball courts sited beside the Aquatic Centre.

Our opposition to a large stadium at Abbotstown was based on the lack of a credible transport plan.

Sports Campus Ireland intends to consult the local community at all stages of the Development, and the local community will have off peak access to all the facilities.

Issues to keep an eye on are what has been buried, or incinerated and buried, on the site from the State Laboratories

## Employment

In the past 15 years Dublin 15 has moved from an unemployment level of 20% (with local black spots of 80% unemployment in some estates) to a position of near full employment. The Town centre contributed to this improved situation providing many local people with jobs, but industrial land in north Blanchardstown is the biggest contributor to this success.

For over a decade Ireland has been successfully promoting itself as a suitable and preferred location for Knowledge Based / High Added Value industries, the attraction of such businesses to our island has been one of the significant factors in sustaining the Country's economic progress over the past decade.

To facilitate and attract such businesses to Fingal the Council has in place a strategy which has a pro business approach and has seen the introduction of a ST1( science and technology) objective for zoning purposes. Over the past five years the North Blanchardstown area has attracted a number of high profile ventures to the area, IBM and Bristol Myers Squibb just to mention two of the more prominent projects.

The industrial zoned land in Dublin 15 between the N3 and the N2 is currently the largest Industrial zoned area in the state. It is approximately seven (7) times the size of Sandyford industrial Estate. Within this industrial zoning there are several different categories.

- Science & technology.
- Warehousing
- General Industrial

Each of these zoning has particular needs, and attracts a variety of workforces. The Science & technology zoning is particularly significant, it links up with the Blanchardstown Institute of Technology to provide clusters of high value jobs. The “spin off” from this activity has contributed to making Dublin 15 an attractive place to live and work. Warehousing and General Industrial zoning contribute to a healthy employment mix providing a wide range of local employment for residents of Dublin 15.

Recent transport studies commissioned by Fingal County Council (Clifton Scannell Emmerson – February 2000 and SIAS – unpublished) identify traffic flows into & out of the area. It came as a surprise to many that incoming traffic flows exceeded egress in the morning rush hr. The proposed link road from industrial zoned land to the N2 is critical to the development of the area, as it diverts industrial traffic out of residential areas and is key to the area growing to it's potential.

### **Significant developments**

Three significant developments occurred this year

- ❑ More land was re-zoned from agricultural to industrial and a new category of industrial zoning for warehousing.
- ❑ Cruiserath variation was approved to change lands between Bristol Myers Squibb and Tyrellstown from Science & technology to Warehousing.
- ❑ Fingal County Council granted planning permission to relocate the Hammond lane scrap yard to a site near IBM.

### **New category of industrial zoning for warehousing**

This land is concentrated close to the proposed Cheryhound interchange on the N2. While this makes sense in the context of the improvements to the N2 between Ashbourn and the M50, we believe all development on these lands should be conditional on the construction of the new distributor road from the Cherryhound interchange to the Cruiserath road.

### **Cruiserath variation**

Fingal County Council proposed a Draft Variation to change lands between Bristol Myers Squibb and Tyrellstown from Science & technology *“to provide for Retail Warehousing and Motor Showrooms”*

The Community Council, the Industrial Development Authority (IDA) and Swords Laboratories objected to the proposed variation to the County Development Plan.

The proposed variation from a planning, development and economic perspective was unnecessary. The retail development should be located in the lands specifically zoned for this purpose adjacent to the proposed Cherryhound interchange.

The variation will damage the Strategic Planning and Development Policies of Fingal in relation to its ability to attract / retain significant high quality business/industry projects in the county. It is imperative that we preserve the capacity and attractiveness of the ST1 zoning for future high grade project opportunities. It is these types of projects that will ensure our continued success as an economy and serve to produce high quality jobs for our school/college leavers.

The area has since the late 90s, suffered from severe mobility issues due to the high level of both residential and industrial development in Dublin 15. In support of the industrial and residential zoned areas of North Blanchardstown the Council has a programme of essential road building, designed to serve the needs of the current planned development for the area. Those improvements were strongly supported by the Community Council as necessary and long overdue.

The SIAS transport report (commissioned by Fingal) largely outlines our concerns that retail warehousing in this location would soak up capacity on the new roads and adversely impact on the mobility issues of the greater Blanchardstown area.

Following representations, the variation was adopted with the following restrictions:

Local Objective: *'No development shall be occupied until the planned road improvements in the area are in place; this shall include the N2-N3 link road.'*

Local Objective: *'No single retail unit shall exceed 6,000 square metres in gross floor area and the total retail warehousing facilities shall not exceed 20,000 square metres in gross floor area.'*

Local Objective: *'The retail warehousing and motor sales development shall be confined to the northern end of the site.'*

Local Objective: *'Any application for development shall be accompanied by a transport impact assessment and mobility management plan.'*

### **Hammond Lane scrap yard**

Planning permission was granted to the Hammond Lane Metal Company to construct scrap yard in Damastown in the site previously owned by Scottish Power. This site is to the rear of IMB. The plant and buildings will consist of a fragmentation plant, shears, end of life vehicle (ELV) building, non-ferrous metals building, workshop, offices, weigh-bridges, bunds for oil and waste liquids from ELV process, and ancillary works and services. Site development works will include the re-routing of the adjacent stream, and earthworks to raise the level of the site. The grant of permission restricts the scrap heap size to 10 meters (30 feet) height.

The Community Council (and local residents associations) opposed this application for a number of reasons:

- The site is zoned science and technology and is adjacent to several clean industries. Locating a metal scrap yard nearby risks existing large scale jobs because of environmental emissions and the visual impact. The science and technology zoning specifically excludes scrap yards.
- There is insufficient Fire Tenders in Blanchardstown to deal with a fire if one broke out in this plant. (Several fires have occurred in the current site at Hammond Lane).

Fingal county council granted planning permissions, the decision was appealed to An Bord Pleanála in November 2005.

### **Blanchardstown Area Partnership**

The Community Council is represented on the Community Development Planning Implementation Board of the Blanchardstown Area Partnership.

### **Fingal Tourism**

The Community Council is represented on Fingal Tourism.

## Transportation

It has been another year of increasing demand on our roads and public transport network as thousands of people continue to flock to Dublin 15 to live and work.

Planning permissions for thousands of homes continues to be issued despite the lack of capacity within our public transport services to carry the demand that the new developments will inevitably generate. It is no longer acceptable to merely state that people need to have somewhere to live, without addressing the basic needs and services that people living in a modern society require. The lack of an adequate public transportation system is now one of the primary issues that residents and business of Dublin 15 most frequently cite as affecting their 'Quality of Life' and business.

We must continue to press for and demand a quality, integrated Public Transport system for commuting to and from and within Dublin 15.

The delivery of a 'Best in Class' Public Transport network for Dublin 15 and the Greater Dublin Area has been a long standing strategic objective of the Community Council. For over a decade now we have consistently lobbied our politicians and public/civil servants of the need to make available and deliver the infrastructure necessary to build and sustain 'new communities'. A fundamental part of that process is the provision of public transport to new communities as soon as the first houses are occupied. As we have frequently said it is not necessary to 'reinvent the wheel' to achieve that objective. Our Continental neighbours have been doing it successfully for over 30years. We should by now seek to learn from them and 'import' the most feasible methods, systems and processes from them that have enabled our European friends to have buses, trains and roads available to greet the first residents moving into new neighbourhoods.

To help bring this about we have over the past twelve months met and been in contact with all of our TDs', Senators and County Councillors. Also, we have held regular meetings and discussions with Dublin Bus, Irish Rail and relevant Fingal County Council representatives to discuss business plans, ideas, problems/ solutions. And most importantly to lobby and to ensure that our Community needs are kept in the forefront of our elected representatives and the officials minds.

During the debate on the new County Development Plan this year we successfully argued that the existing 'Greenbelt' at Kellystown should be preserved. To rezone that for housing in the absence of the prior provision of the necessary transport and other community provisions would be reckless, as we are already 'swamped' with development in this area. The majority of County Councillors agreed with this view and did not rezone the Greenbelt as the Developers and Council Planners had sought.

We also appeared once again before An Bord Pleanála in a further oral hearing on the Hansfield Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) which was recently held after two years of revisions and amendments to the original plan. The existing lack of capacity on public transport and the failure to clearly demonstrate the availability of additional public transport to Hansfield was one of the principal reasons why the Bord rejected the initial plan. It is amazing that the Developers and Council were originally ‘happy’ to allow a further 7,500 people move into the area, whilst failing to ensure that they would have adequate means of getting to and from their residences.

Members might be surprised to hear that we regularly liaise with businesses and the Chamber of Commerce on transportation and mobility (roads) issues. However, we long ago recognised that the major parties tend to listen and respond to political representations from Business far more quickly than community organisations. Also, we all have a common interest in having an efficient public transport service in the area, it therefore makes good sense that we keep in contact with the Chamber and business on this important issue.

The Community Council also has representatives participating on the Fingal Community Forum, an umbrella group for Community organisations in Fingal. Through this Forum we have many opportunities to influence policies that could affect the provision of public transport to this area.

Perhaps one of the most eagerly awaited initiatives from Government in the area of Public Transport services was the publication and launching of the recent Transport 21 initiatives by the Government. A considerable amount of the material relating to this area would have been Community Council policy for over a decade. It is pleasing to note that we were once again ‘ahead of the posse’ in our vision and understanding of what is needed to ‘make Dublin 15 run smoothly’. We were successful in lobbying for our rail links to Dublin city centre to be via Connolly Station and the new station in Spenser Docks. Hopefully the Government and the responsible agencies will ensure an early delivery of the promised infrastructural improvements / initiatives that we so desperately need to relieve the gridlock and overcrowding on our buses and trains.

Over the coming year we will see further demand grow for our bus and train services. In particular the new developments of the Phoenix Park Racecourse and the adjacent Pelletstown will see many thousands of people move into the area and many of whom will require to use public transport. How we cope with this, as the trains are already full by the time they reach that area, remains to be seen.

## **Conclusion**

The foregoing issues illustrate why we need a strong Community Council and why we always need to be vigilant and ensure that ordinary people's voices are heard.

The issues facing community groups in Dublin 15 can seem to be insurmountable but together we can make a difference and achieve more together than separately.

The Community Council welcomes all voluntary groups in the Dublin 15 postal district and provides an environment where we can help each other to make the Dublin 15 area a great place to live in.

**With your support we can carry on and continue to make a difference.**