



Mr Kieran Mulvey,
Department of an Taoiseach
North Inner City Taskforce

October 24, 2016

Dear Kieran,

Thank you for the work you are doing on behalf of the Government to produce a report and recommendations for the north east inner city in Dublin.

As a member of Fianna Fáil and the North Inner City Community Coalition I generally support the detailed submission made by the North Inner City Community Coalition and make the following additional comments and suggestions.

Dublin's north east inner city is geographically compact but socially and economically vastly diverse. The Taoiseach and Government's attention has been attracted by recent killings in the area. Gangland crime did not appear overnight and the problems will not be solved overnight. The Government must take a sustained and sustainable long-term approach to solve the problems which to date are associated with the indigenous community.

The north east inner city is in the heart of our capital city. A policy decision must be made at the highest levels to treat it as the "jewel in the crown" and to reverse the ghetto image. This will require significant commitment to improvements of the built environment, public spaces, housing, education, health, employment and policing of the area.

To bring about such a change the Government should identify a statutory authority to work with the local community to champion, coordinate and deliver a long term sustainable transformation of the north east inner city to a vibrant, successful and advantaged community. There is a wealth of experience and expertise available in the area that should be engaged and supported to bring about a sustainable transformation to a vibrant, successful and advantaged community.

All the funding required will not be readily available to address all the needs in one go so a structure should be established to ensure that the required funding is provided over the long term and on a sustained basis.

The exclusion of the north east inner city from the docklands Strategic Development Zone was a mistake and has a potentially ghettoising affect on the north east inner city. The department of the Environment should review the boundary of the SDZ with a view to incorporating the north east inner city into the SDZ.

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Dereliction in the area should not be tolerated and the Department of the Environment and Finance should incentivise regeneration and redevelopment in the area and penalise dereliction. The disparity between the streetscape of the IFSC and the surrounding streets outside of the SDZ must be acknowledged and corrected.

Disadvantage where it occurs in the north inner city is a result of poor health, housing, unemployment, and lack of education. Economic and social disadvantage is often experienced on a multi-generational basis. Government must focus on ending chronic disadvantage by investing in all generations from the cradle to the grave.

It is impossible for any person to function to their full potential at school, work or socially if they do not have a place to call home. There is significant inadequacy of housing in the north east inner city. Imagine for a moment what it must be like to be a new parent without a place of your own to bring your baby “home” to? Or imagine being that young baby with no place of your own to crawl or learn to walk in, to learn to feed, to grow-up and learn to play in, to do homework or be with friends or family? Everyone needs a home and the Government should make addressing the chronic housing situation a top priority for the area.

Existing housing in the north inner city is a mix of local authority/voluntary housing organisations social housing and/or private owned or rented. Many people live in overcrowded and/or substandard accommodation. There is significant demand for social and affordable housing in the area. Less than 25% of residents own their home in the north east inner city. In the very disadvantaged areas of the north east inner city almost 80% of residents are Dublin City Council tenants.

Dublin City Council and the Department of the Environment should be required to produce a statement of housing need for the area and a plan to address and meet such need within a three to five year period. This action should be given the highest priority and reviewed by the Dáil on an annual basis.

As the largest residential landlord in the area Dublin City Council must take a much more proactive role in estate management in the north east inner city. Dublin City Council should produce an estate management plan that spells out in plain English its areas of responsibility, issues to be resolved and actions to be completed over the next one, five and ten years. Such estate management plan should be reviewed and approved by local City Councillors on an annual basis.

The new Summerhill Primary Care Facility is ideally positioned to take a lead role in co-ordination and delivery of general health, addiction and mental health services. Services should be focused

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and delivered based on patient needs not organisations generic service objectives. There is concern that the new Primary Care facility will be unaffordable and inaccessible to the economically disadvantaged local community. This must be clarified and corrected. Addiction should be treated as a medical illness and increased and adequate resources provided to give equal opportunity for recovery. The wholly inadequate available resources for residential recovery must be corrected.

An Education Officer should be assigned to work with community and state educators to co-ordinate, support and report on education participation from pre-school through to third level in the area. Such officer should be charged with working with all stakeholders to maximise educational participation and completion. Early intervention education must be adequately resourced so that every child under two is guaranteed a childcare place. Special emphasis should be given at the end of primary school and through secondary school to ensure successful transition from primary and completion of secondary school. Educational achievement should be recognised and rewarded in the community. The Department of Education should measure and report annually on educational achievement in the area.

Lourdes Day Care Centre provides an invaluable service for elderly people in the community. It is underfunded and underdeveloped. Multi-annual capital funding should be put in place to allow for the redevelopment and upgrading of the facility as per the recommendations of the board of management.

The department of Justice, Family and Youth affairs should profile those killed, charged and/or incarcerated for serious crime with a view to identifying common key risk indicators and use findings to recommend early intervention and prevention measures to relevant stakeholders.

Gardai detect and prosecute crime to the best of their ability with the available resources. There is an exceptionally strong senior Garda management team dedicated to the north inner city but their expertise, knowledge and skills have been undermined by inadequate resourcing in recent years. The Gardai should be given increased and sufficient resources for dedicated Small Area Community Policing without having to borrow Gardai from other parts of the constituency. Community Gardai should be assigned for a minimum of three to five years to the area to allow them get to know the community and for the community to get to know them. Community Gardai should visit homes, schools, training facilities, businesses and public spaces on a daily basis. The presence of armed special Garda units should not be the norm in the north east inner city. Gardai must be given increased and adequate resources to resolve the ongoing and persistent anti-social behaviour on St Laurence's Place East and other key public spaces. An increased Garda presence on the streets and in public spaces will allow them to be reclaimed from anti-social activity and drug dealing. The announcement that Fitzgibbon Street Garda Station is to re-open is

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welcome but it must be backed-up by the Government giving adequate funding to bring it up to operational standards. The Department of Justice should commit to adequate multi-annual funding for Gardai and resources in the area. Annual policing plans for the area should be approved by the Joint Policing Committee.

The north east inner city is one of the most heavily trafficked road networks in the country. The department of transport should provide increased and adequate funding to improve safety for walking and cycling in the north east inner city. The segregated section of cycle route on O'Connell Street from Abbey Street to O'Connell Bridge is a highly effective and cost efficient road safety measure. To avoid further cyclist fatalities in the area this type of segregated cycle space should be replicated on other main routes in the area e.g. Amiens Street, Summerhill, Ballybough, Seville Place and the North Strand. The Department of Transport and Environment should provide funding for the upgrading of the Royal Canal tow path from Spencer Dock to Binns Bridge. There is a long-standing demand for this off-road cycle and footpath. The decision to cut funding for this project was short-sighted and should be reversed. Investment in improved walking and cycling facilities in the area will not only benefit the local community but also the hundreds and thousands of people who work, visit and pass through the north east inner city every day. Increased pedestrian and cycling in the area will be a positive street level intervention.

There is a strong historical tradition of sport and culture in the north inner city and a vibrant artistic and creative community both of which should be supported and encouraged in the area. A permanent home and community cultural hub should be created to house the North Inner City Folklore and Docklands projects. To foster continued artistic and creative activity subsidised Artist's studios and accommodation should be delivered as part of the SDZ. The unique natural resources of the Liffey, Royal Canal, Parnell Square, Mountjoy Square, O'Connell Street and other public spaces should be developed for year round maximum public usage. Proper functioning safe public spaces are essential for healthy and peaceful inner city living. Public spaces should be developed to encourage and support communal activities and supplement limited private accommodations.

Finally, in recent years the north inner city of Dublin has become the most socially and ethnically diverse parts of the country with a large portion of the current population identifying as "non Irish". This diversity must be recognised and catered for in all social and economic developments and plans for the area.

Thanks again for your work for the north inner city. We look forward to your report but in the meantime if Fianna Fáil or I personally can be of any assistance please don't hesitate to contact me.

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Sincerely,

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