

The Chairman and Members of
North West Area Committee.

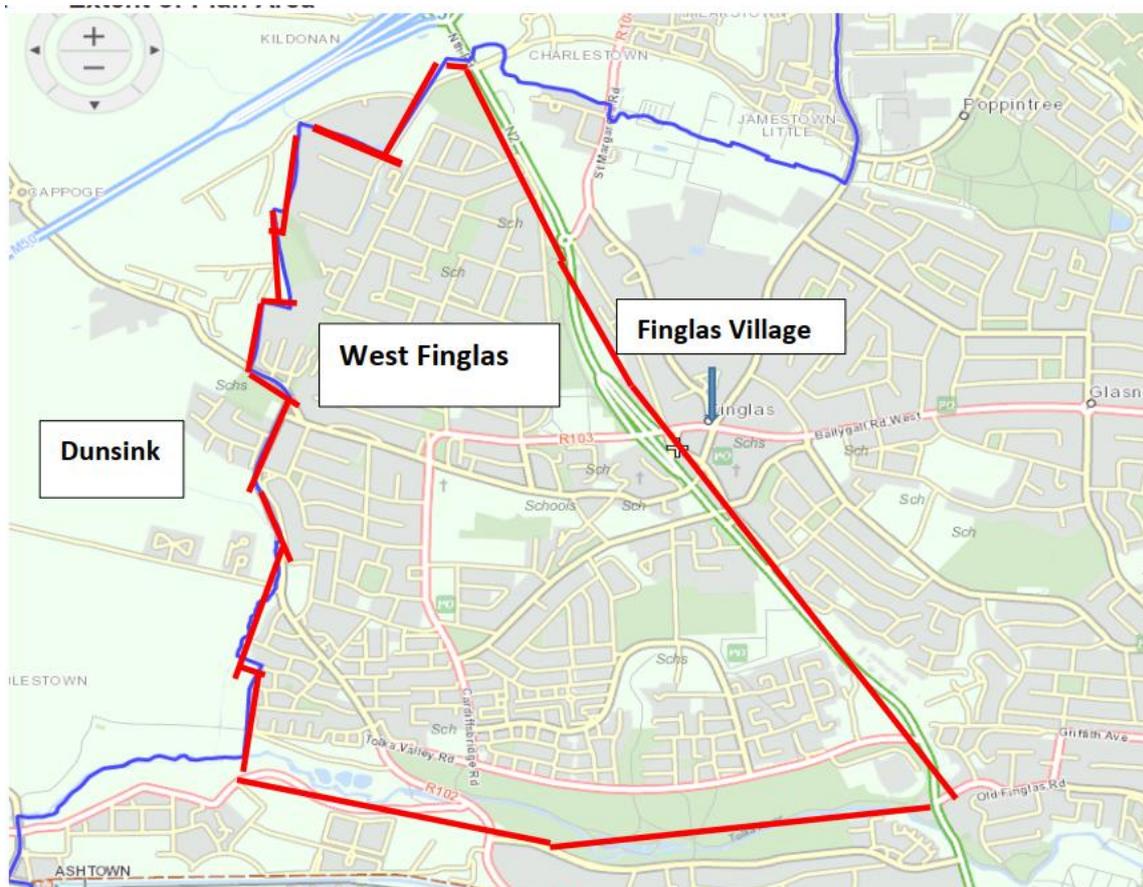
Meeting: 19th February 2019

Item No: 10

Finglas Concept Plan Report -Study Update

Introduction

The purpose of the Study is to examine the area, in the context of the need for housing and the possible opportunities for new social and/or affordable housing provision on Council owned lands within the area; and, following this, to examine the wider issues facing the area, and the possibilities of providing a new focus for investment by the Council and other stakeholders in the area, including improved amenities and transport provision.



Context

Finglas, and Finglas West and South in particular, forms a large suburb of the City where a high proportion of the housing was built either by Dublin Corporation or other voluntary housing bodies over a number of decades largely from the 1950s to the 1970s with a few infill additions in the past decade.

The village itself was severed by the construction of the Finglas dual-carriage way in the 1960s, which was later lowered to provide an overpass arrangement in the early 1990s. The core retail function of the village has declined, with the impact of new shopping at initially “Janelle” (Tesco) on the Finglas road in the late 1980s, and later Charlestown shopping centre in the early 2000s.

The housing areas surrounding the village were built generally in a low density suburban model, with large areas of undeveloped open space left between each estate. Some of these space have been used for local housing infill, but others contain underground services and some have contamination issues. Population in the study area has been in decline, except where large developments of new housing have taken place. Population in the area has fallen by 13% in 25 years, and when the area containing Prospect Hill is excluded, population overall has fallen by 20%. One Electoral Division (Finglas South C) in the study area has had its population decline by 30% in 25 years. Whilst this decline has been tempered in the last two Census years by new residential infill, the occupancy levels continue to fall. Whilst the last Census saw a 5% increase in population, this was on foot of a housing unit increase of over 9%.

The age profile is one with a higher proportion of older people, and low numbers of people per house in certain areas. This falling occupancy level and population has an impact on the ability to retain and maintain local services, schools and retail.

Recent developments, both in the Dublin City and Fingal Council areas, particularly in the Jamestown Road area of Finglas East, and Ratoath Road in the West, have helped increase the wider population catchment for Finglas village and also provided new housing that has allowed new families move into the area and provided the next generation with local options to stay.

Key Issues

The area is facing a number of challenges and also opportunities.

- The falling population as a result of declining levels of house occupancy requires a continuing programme of new infill housing to support the population to a sustainable level to ensure existing local services can be retained and improved.
- There is a need to promote mixed tenure and house type in the area and mixed income housing to create sustainable communities and there is high demand from within the area for new social housing and for purpose build housing for older people.
- The National Transport Authority’s expressed intent to extend the Broombridge Luas to immediately north of Finglas presents an opportunity to provide a high quality,

highly accessible public transport service for the area. It also presents a challenge in ensuring that the customer catchment available to the Luas will support the proposed service and opportunity to integrate with the Bus Connects programme, and promote cycling and walkable neighbourhoods.

- There are a number of land parcels and sites across the area that could be used better, and would support quality placemaking and some could provide quality new infill housing.
- A new recreational strategy for the area would allow for a more focussed approach to public open space and facilities in the area.
- The area would benefit from a community audit and engagement with the Department of Education and Skills.
- Finglas village could benefit from a focussed public realm and design framework approach to encourage quality new development (both public and private) in a coordinated manner.
- Finglas West needs an improved focal point for retail and local services.
- The National Planning Framework and the (draft) Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (RSES) requires that Dublin City Council actively pursue a policy of quality densification within the M50 to ensure that future population needs of the City can be accommodated.
- The new RSES includes a plan for Metropolitan Dublin (MASP) which refers to a future growth area of Dunsink in the Fingal Council area, adjacent to the Study area, and which will generate new opportunities and challenges in itself.
- There is a need for a co-ordinated traffic and movement plan for the area, including examining the current pressures on Finglas village.

Next Steps

The study is reaching a key point and we would like to invite the Elected Members to a workshop to discuss a range of feasible options and outcomes for the Study prior to its completion.

An issues and options paper will be circulated in advance of the workshop to aid the discussion.

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