

Darndale Implementation Oversight Group

The social and economic issues of the Darndale area in Dublin North have been well documented for many years. Following a series of events in 2019, Dublin City Council assumed a leadership role in tackling these longstanding, complex and engrained issues.

As a first step, Dublin City Council engaged Dr. Jack Nolan, retired Assistant Commissioner to undertake an in depth review of the area including identification of the issues and significant engagement with stakeholders and local residents. This process resulted in the publication of a Report “Darndale A Long View of an Enduring Challenge” in October 2020.

Since then, Dublin City Council has established an Implementation Oversight Group comprising of representatives of many of the statutory agencies and groups providing services in the area to advance the recommendations of the Report.

Baring in mind that the group was implemented in the middle of the Covid pandemic, the group met regularly on a monthly basis via zoom and the attendance and participation of senior officers of agencies was exemplary. These agencies came to the table to listen and where needed came to the fore with projects to achieve the goals laid out in the Jack Nolan Report, ‘Darndale a long view of an enduring challenge’. The following are some of the achievements brought forward by different agencies:

- The Gardai have increased their numbers within the area and the local community are beginning to see a greater presence within Darndale. A Community sergeant and two community Gardai have begun attending the Community Representative Forum and the Community Gardai have been running a new Garda clinic on a weekly basis in the Darndale Belcamp Village Centre. This space is provided by the management of the Village Centre. The Gardai are also working with DCC in order to achieve authorisation for the 11 street cameras presently in the Darndale area. They have also begun their late night soccer league in conjunction with the FAI and DCC in the Darndale Recreation Centre.
- The HSE have been working on a healthy eating programme within the area and are working on developing a CE scheme within the area to help with this programme. They are running a quit smoking programme also within the area. Darndale has also been included in the HSE’s Healthy Ireland initiative. The Minister for Health also spent a few hours in Darndale at the launch of the healthy eating programme. Drugs outreach workers have also been appointed to work in the area at night under the Dales Drug Programme. The Dales programme receive €180,000 on a multi-annual basis to run this programme and the team is made up of a supervisor, two outreach workers and a recovery coach. The three outreach workers are wholetime employees and are working four nights a week in the area. The recovery coach is working 15 hours per week. The HSE are moving these workers into the old Tusla building in the courtyard of the Bell Building and are also placing three Health & Wellbeing workers in here covering smoking cessation, Healthy eating and chronic disease management. There are also tentative plans to add a doctor and nurse to the staff.
- The CDYSB have arranged youth outreach workers to work with hard to reach youth in the area. This was initially a pilot project between Edenmore Drug Intervention Team (EDIT) & Sphere 17 which began in 2021. The team use a detached model of youth work to target young people not currently attending any centre based groups. A joint application based on the pilot project which included the previously mentioned two projects along with Kilmore West Youth Project was made for the Hard to Reach Initiative. The application was successful and is in receipt of its own funding (€128,000 annually) and its own service

requirement. They have a wholetime project leader and 2 youth activity workers (3 days). The hours concentrated on by this Hard to reach team are evenings, late nights and weekends. The workers are hosted by Sphere 17 and they operate primarily out of the Sphere building in Darndale.

- The Northside Partnership have recently appointed a healthy communities coordinator. They are involved in some of the HSE's initiatives such as smoking cessation and healthy eating. They organised the launch of the healthy eating programme which was attended by the Minister for Health. They also arranged the very successful apprenticeship fair which they located in Darndale. They have secured funding to the value of €188,650 for a Place-Based Leadership Programme. This is a pilot leadership programme which is based in both Darndale & Drogheda. There are 24 participants involved from each area, made up of State Agencies, local projects and local residents. This project was designed for the two areas after the string of murders back in 2019. Minister Joe O'Brien was in the Hilton Hotel for the launch of the programme on induction day in January 2022. Three members of staff from DCC, three from an Garda Síochána and staff from the HSE, Tusla, Northside Partnership, the Dales, PACE, Sphere 17, Archways and local schools along with local residents are attending the course which will go on until July 2023. The Partnership also convened the local network 'Get the message out' (GTMO) which is made up of all local stakeholders and the message is that there is Another Way for the youth.
- The Department of Justice sit on the IOG and they have funded the Greentown project which is being rolled out by Archways and the University of Limerick in conjunction with the Gardai and other agencies. This is based on the previous Red & Bluetown projects back in 2001. Archways also funded the Steps project which was another leadership type course from the Northside Partnership and Archways and the Northside Partnership rolled out the 'Another Way, 5K' in conjunction with numerous members of the network as part of the GTMO campaign.
- Dublin City Council carry out ongoing clean-ups of public spaces, Enhancement of public realm, i.e Removal of boulders, Pop up park, Upgrading bollards, refreshing lamp standards, Landscaping of green area at Snowdrop walk, Pop up Garden across from Bell Building, Enhancement of green area at Tulip Court
The Community Representative Forum meet on a monthly basis, first Wednesday of each month.
The Darndale Together Safety Forum has recommenced and met on 1st June 2022 and will meet every quarterly. This meeting will take place the same time as The Community Representative Forum. The objective of the Darndale Together Safety Forum is to promote positive relationships between Gardaí, Dublin City Council and local representative groups to deal with local community safety and security issues.
Dublin City Council has engaged Urban Agency for Architectural Services for Darndale Public Realm Strategy. The site consists of Darndale, Belcamp, and Moatview. A number of studies have been undertaken by DCC across the study area for consolidation of housing and community projects. There is a need to look at Darndale on a number of scales. The main focus of this work will be to focus on the main street of Darndale and to look at public realm upgrades to create a quality place and to ascertain what public realm projects DCC can and should undertake in the short-term in Darndale. In order to do this correctly Urban Agency are looking at the wider Darndale area, to map what projects are currently being undertaken so that there are no gaps or overlaps in proposals

These are all genuine improvement initiatives that were not occurring a year ago and great credit is due to the vision, enthusiasm, and commitment of the Implementation Oversight Group in making this happen. While significant progress has been made, there is still a long road ahead with many challenges and obstacles to be overcome. We need the continued support and commitment of central government departments to overcome these obstacles and to create a durable and sustainable community in the area that can look forward to a brighter future with the expectation that together Darndale can be better.