**St Cuthberts Park, Lealand Road, Part 8 Housing Proposal**

**Submission by Eoin Ó Broin TD & Cllr Mark Ward**

**20.1.16**

**Introduction**

In January 2016 Sinn Féin carried out a detailed door to door survey in Lindisfarne Grove, Melrose Park and Crescent and Lealand Road, Avenue and Walk.

The purpose of the survey was to provide residents with a copy of the proposed housing development, to explain the plans and to listen to peoples views on the proposal.

A total of 181 houses were surveyed, focusing on those houses closest to the proposed development.

Houses that didn’t answer were left with a copy of the plan and asked to ring to provide feedback. These houses were called to a second time. A number of residents provided their feedback by phone and e-mail.

**Survey Responses**

The response rates to the survey are listed below:

**Total**

181 houses surveyed in the three estates

147 responses received representing a response rate of 81%

**Lindisfarne Grove**

62 houses surveyed in Lindisfarne Grove

47 responses received representing a response rate of 75%

**Lealand Rd/Av/Walk**

73 houses surveyed in Lealand Road, Avenue and Walk

61 houses responded representing a response rate of 83%

**Melrose Pk/Cr**

46 houses were surveyed in Melrose Park and Crescent

39 houses responded representing a response rate of 81%

In addition to surveying the houses Sinn Féin met with Deansrath Community College and the Lindisfarne Grove Environmental Group.

All respondents were asked if they supported the proposal, opposed the proposal and if they wanted any changes or additions to the proposal.

The details of the responses are detailed below:

**Total**

113 respondents supported/were not opposed to the proposal representing 77%

23 respondents were opposed/ did not support the proposal representing 16%

9 respondents had mixed views on the proposal representing 6%

2 respondents had no opinion on the proposal representing 1%

Deansrath Community College supported the proposal

Lindisfarne Grove Environmental Group opposed the proposal

**Lindisfarne Grove**

36 respondents supported/were not opposed to the proposal representing 77%

6 respondents opposed/did not support the proposal representing 13%

3 respondents had mixed views on the proposal representing 6%

2 respondents had no opinion on the proposal representing 4%

**Lealand Rd/Av/Walk**

48 respondents supported/were not opposed to the proposal representing 79%

8 respondents opposed/did not support the proposal representing 13%

5 respondents had mixed views on the proposal representing 8%

0 respondents had no opinion on the proposal

**Melrose Pk/Cre**

29 respondents supported/were not opposed to the proposal representing 74%

9 respondents opposed/did not support the proposal representing 16%

1 respondents had mixed views on the proposal representing 3%

0 respondents had no opinion on the proposal

The overwhelming majority of respondents whether in support, opposed or with mixed views on the proposal raised a number of concerns both with the current design of the housing proposal and with broader issues in St Cuthberts Park.

While the survey results above indicate broad support for the proposal the details of peoples responses make clear that South Dublin County Council must take on board the concerns in amendments and additions to the current proposal.

These are detailed below:

**Anti Social Behaviour**

The single biggest concern amongst residents is the ongoing issue of anti social behaviour in St Cuthbert’s Park, in particular issues of scramblers, quads, stolen cars and illegal dumping.

Many residents, both opposed to and in support of the housing proposal were concerned that increasing the number of families in the area would add to these problems.

Other residents believed that the building of the houses provided an opportunity, if additional measures were included, to start addressing the difficulties in the park.

To deal with these concerns Sinn Féin recommends:

* The Council immediately establish the St Cuthbert’s Park Task Force with senior Council officials, senior Gardaí, Community representatives and politicians to develop and implement a plan to reclaim the park. The plan should be developed in advance of any development in the park and implemented in parallel with any development
* Consider running a line of houses down from the end of the current plan at the Deansrath Community College end at a 90˚ angle down to Melrose Park to block access to motorised vehicles along the park.
* The Council should increase the public lighting along the pedestrian path adjacent to Lindisfarne Grove, Melrose Park and Deansrath Park and along the paths up to Deansrath Community College to enhance the safety in the park.
* The Council should raise the boundary wall surrounding the park to make it more difficult for motorised vehicles to access the park but not too high as to obscure passive surveillance
* All gates and kissing gates into the park should be reviewed and strengthened to prevent further vandalism

**Enhancement of Cuthberts Park**

A large number of respondents also requested greater investment in communities facilities in the park as part of the effort to reclaim it. While people were aware that some actions could not be undertaken in the current climate they expressed a desire for them to be included in any plan for the development of the park.

The following proposals should be included in any plan:

* A properly maintained football pitch
* A play space
* Additional trees
* Flower beds
* Stronger kissing gates
* Additional public lighting
* Raised boundary wall

**Access to Deansrath Community College**

Deansrath Community College were strongly supportive of the proposed development both in terms of enhancing their own security and ensuring future enrolments.

However both the school and residents raised the issue of pedestrian access to the school from Cuthbert’s Park and Lealand Walk expressing a strong view that this access must be retained.

To address these concerns Sinn Féin recommends:

* An on site meeting with SDCC architects Department and Deansrath Community College Principle and grounds staff to clarify boundary, access and drainage issues.
* Ensuring the maintenance of pedestrian access via Cuthbert’s park at or close to existing school gate
* Enhancement of pedestrian entrance to school at Lealand Walk including a wheelchair ramp for local resident and raising wall to prevent anti social access when gate is locked.

**Traffic**

A large number of residents expressed concern that the housing development would result in an increase in traffic. Particular concern was expressed regarding exiting Lealand and Lindisfarne past Nano Nagle School at school drop off times.

To address this issue Sinn Féin proposes:

* Consideration be given, in the context of the proposal to run a line of houses down to Melrose Park, of opening a second access point into the estate at that point. However if this is considered it would also be recommended to split the new road from Lealand Road to Melrose Park in two to prevent it being used as an access route through the two estates.
* SDCC Roads Department staff should meet with the Principle at Nano Nagle School to discuss the potential traffic implications of the new development.

**Drainage**

A number of respondents raised the question of water logging in the park and the issue of flooding. They expressed a concern that the park may require additional drainage work to ensure that this does not become a problem in the future.

To address these concerns Sinn Féin recommends that:

* A full drainage survey is conducted in the park before any development takes place.
* All necessary drainage measures are put in place as part of the development to ensure that potential water-logging or flooding are fully dealt with.

**House Densities**

Residents in 98-89 Lealand avenue expressed a particular concern about the density and height of the houses being proposed at the side and back of their properties.

The current proposal seeks to place 14 two story units surrounding 6 two story units. This will have an impact on the existing residents privacy, view and access to laneways for bins.

To address these concerns Sinn Féin proposes:

* Reducing the number of units at this location and inserting them elsewhere in the development (possibly in a new line of units down to Melrose Park)
* Replacing a number of these two story houses with single story bungalows for older people and/or single people.
* SDCC architects department staff to hold on site meetings with residents at this location to discuss the issue of laneway access.

**Laneways**

Residents in Lealand Avenue and Lealand Walk raised concerns about the impact of any housing development on existing lanways and access for bins. Others also raised objections to any new laneways and the possibility of attracting additional anti social behaviour.

To address this issue Sinn Féin recommends:

* SDCC architects department to meet affected residents on site to discuss impact of any development on existing access and laneways and to ensure that no additional laneways are provided where residents do not want them.

**House Size & Allocations Policy**

Residents raised a number of concerns regarding the unit size and allocation policy for any new development. People felt that given the need for one and two bedroom houses on both the housing and homeless list any development should include units of this size.

Respondents also requested that the Council ensure that the allocations include people from the general list, the homeless/medical priority list and the transfer/medical transfer list.

A number of residents also highlight the fact that the area is very settled and that some consideration should be given within the general allocations scheme, for ensuring that people with existing connections to the area who also have a housing need be considered for allocation.

To address these concerns Sinn Féin proposes:

* The proposed development should be amended to include a number of one and two bedroom units
* One bedroom units should be used both to downsize existing tenants from the surrounding area including over-accommodated pensioners and to house single person households or older couples on the housing, homeless or medical priority list.
* Where downsizing occurs the units freed-up elsewhere in Council stock should be used for families in homeless and medical priority.
* Given the high concentration of anti social behaviour in St Cuthberts Park the Council should be sensitive to this when considering allocations and carefully monitor compliance with tenancy agreements in the first months of any new tenancy.
* While housing families currently in inappropriate hotel emergency accommodation is clearly a priority, the Council should use the transfer list to ensure that there isn't an over-concentration of specific household sizes or types while maintaining a high level of homeless allocations. This could be achieved by providing transfers to families on the transfer list in the surrounding estates and using the units freed up for some of the homeless priority allocations.

**House Finish & Quality**

Previous infill housing projects in the Clondalkin Area have used a design finish out of character with the existing housing stock. A significant number of residents stressed the need for any new developments to ‘blend in’ with existing properties.

Lealand Road already has a number of timber frame infill houses which look very similar to existing stock and this approach should be replicated with any new units.

Respondents also raised questions in terms of the quality and longevity of the units.

To address these concerns Sinn Féin recommends:

* SDCC tenders and contracts for any new development must require the providers to ensure that the aesthetic finish of the properties blends in with the existing housing stock in the surrounding estates
* SDCC tenders and contracts for any new development must require the units to have, at a minimum, the same building standards and longevity as existing stock and to meet all legal building, fire safety and energy requirements.

**Conclusion**

The detailed information outlined in this submission demonstrates that while residents understand the need to provide additional social housing in the context of the housing crisis they are very keen to see enhancements and amendments to the scheme as proposed to ensure that any negative impacts on the existing community are minimised.

There was also a strong desire on behalf of many respondents that if their concerns are addressed it would enhance the development both for the existing residents and those who will move into the community.

Sinn Féin is strongly urging the Council to carefully consider all of the recommendations outlined in this report and provide a detailed response to all 30 recommendations in the Part 8 Consultation report presented to elected members prior to any decision on the proposed Cuthbert’s Park development.

Sinn Féin supports the provision of additional social housing at this location on the basis that the development takes into account the views and suggestions of the local community. Sinn Féin believes that all of the issues raised by residents, as detailed above, are reasonable and can be accommodated without compromising the existing development in terms of overall concept or speed of delivery.