

Committee on Key Issues affecting the Traveller Community

24/06/26

- Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre welcomes the proposed development of the Dunsink area
- It is estimated over a number of years there is potential to build over 18 thousand units of housing
- This is important given that we are in the middle of a national housing crisis
- In addition to the housing units, there are plans to deliver new schools, parks, active travel networks and cultural amenities. This too is a welcome development.
- I want to acknowledge that Fingal County Council have initiated a consultation process and as part of this they will be reaching out to the Traveller community
- This is really important because there is a palpable fear and concern within the community that those families currently

residing in Dunsink will be displaced to make room for the settlers.

- There is a real concern that the three official sites will be commissioned. If this were to happen and Traveller families displaced, it would be straight out of the playbook of the oppressor.
- **By way context**, it's important that this committee is familiar with the history of Travellers living in Dunsink Lane
- The presence of Travellers in Dunsink is not a recent footnote
- It is a 55 year history, as far back as 1972 Travellers first moved to Dunsink lane
- At that time Dunsink was a remote and isolated area, with very poor infrastructure (footpaths, roads, lighting)
- Not only that, but we were living beside one of the largest dumps in Ireland. I bore witness to this reality having lived in Dunsink Lane in a trailer from 1989-2004.
- It was widely speculated that chemicals/toxins were being buried in the dump and what we do know is that the rates of cancer in that general area was much higher than in other parts of Finglas and the wider catchment area.

- I paint a very bleak situation
- But that was the reality
- Between 1972 and 2003 the political classes and the settled community showed scant concern for the welfare of Travellers in the area, and in fact were very happy to allow the situation to continue
- Since the decommissioning of the dump in 2003, things have changed drastically
- Dublin city is sprawling, and the surrounding lands near the dump have become a very attractive proposition i.e for development
- I'd like to take this opportunity to remind the Committee that Fingal county council have adopted a Traveller Accommodation plan - **The Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025 - 2029**
- But this too, is something we are very concerned about
- To quote the plan

“Dunsnik Lane South West: the Council MAY construct a 5-unit group housing scheme adjacent to the existing site to meet the needs of the families in the area, having regard to planning requirements”

“Dunsik South East: the Council MAY construct a 10-unit group housing scheme adjacent to the existing site to meet the needs of the families in the area, having regard to planning requirements”

- Obviously these are not iron clad commitments, the term ‘MAY’ would suggest this very clearly
- This begs the question what is Fingal County Council’s agenda and what are their plans to meet and include the accommodation needs of the families living in the area in the proposed development
- As of now, the families have not been reassured that their accommodation needs will be met
- **Contrast this** to Saint Joseph's Horse and Pony club, and I quote: Colm, Kiernan, chairperson of the club “Hopefully Fingal County Council will look after us, build stables for us, as there’s a huge horse culture going back generations. I’ve been told by Fingal that they’re going to cater for the horse project so I’ll take their word for that,”

- This would suggest there has been dialogue between the council and the club
- And it is only right and proper that there is, and in terms of animal welfare we do hope that there is adequate stabling and supports for the horse owners in Finglas
- However, can we have similar assurances?
- As I have said before on this issue, at the heart of this proposed development should be an ambition, an ambition to build an inclusive, diverse, vibrant community.
- We look forward to engaging with Fingal County Council to realise this ambition