



Submission

Response the Cork City Draft Development Plan 2022-2028

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On behalf of Let's Grow Together! Infant & Childhood Partnerships CLG

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Let's Grow Together! Infant & Childhood Partnerships CLG

Incorporating the Young Knocknaheeny Area Based Childhood Programme, the main objective of Let's Grow Together! is to govern, support, and develop area-based prevention and early intervention programming and approaches that support early childhood development, relationships, and environments. Let's Grow Together! aims to set the foundations for infant and child development, learning, wellbeing, and quality of life outcomes, and by doing so mitigate the intergenerational impact of child poverty. The subsidiary objectives are:

- Respectfully enhancing skills and early childhood development knowledge, of all parents, practitioners, and services.
- Strengthening and supporting all relationships and environments that are important to every child's early development.
- Embedding systems and community change to support early childhood development.
- Undertaking participatory learning and evaluation, documenting and policy development.

This work is underpinned by an innovative Infant Mental Health Framework and draws on best international evidence and practice. The core work of Let's Grow Together! is funded by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and is part of the Area Based Childhood Programme within the TUSLA Child & Family Agency.

Vision

Our communities are places where children experience happy, healthy, and thriving childhoods that last a lifetime, and no child is left behind.

Mission

To work in partnership with everyone important in children's lives, sharing knowledge, skills and resources, empowering families and enabling children through their relationships and in their communities to be nurtured, fulfilled, achieving and learning.

Area Based Prevention and Early Intervention Approach

The activities of Let's Grow Together! are part of a community-based, prevention and early intervention model which is multi-layered and multi-sectoral: evidence-informed direct service provision (programmes and interventions) within communities with families and in partnership with other services; evidence-informed capacity building (training, education, mentoring, coaching) using a supportive approach with interagency partnerships and

childhood services; evidence-informed processes of promotion and awareness at community, local and regional level; and national Area Based Programme Level and policy in partnership with another 11 sites.

Location

Let's Grow Together! is based in two locations: Knocknaheeny and The Meadows. It provides services across the Northwest area of Cork City, shortly expanding also to Mayfield and The Glen. It also supports and connects the work of others across the city, region and nationally.

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The centrality of the importance of early childhood in terms of individual, family, community, and society outcomes is not reflected in the plan. Children require high quality responsive and attuned relationships and high quality, appropriate environments to feel safety, loved, support their wellbeing and to build their resilience to set them up for life. Parents and caregivers of young children need ease in terms of income, mobility, participation, access, education and support in order to buffer toxic stress and to be able to be responsive and attuned to their children. Child centred policy and physical environments are key to support children's life long development and wellbeing

As part of the work of LGT we often consult with children from 3 years of age, their parents and caregivers, services and professionals. We recently did this in relation to our strategic plan, our launch and research into the impact of Covid -which is a forthcoming publication. See references below.

For example the consultation for our 5 years strategy asked children

What makes baby happy?

What makes the adults who support baby happy?

How can the community support the baby to grow up and be happy?

Results Child Feedback

Theme 1: Love, Family and Siblings

Children's artwork incorporated frequent references to family and siblings in a baby's life. Children consistently referred to family members when explaining what they felt makes babies most happy. When describing their pictures, children described how caregivers and siblings make baby happy, and also how baby makes parents and caregivers happy too.

'They [parents] love when it's their babies 1st birthday, that makes them happy'

‘Mammies and daddies love to see big brothers and sisters playing with the baby, this makes them smile’

‘Playing makes a baby happy, especially when their mammy and daddy play with them or their big brothers and sisters’ ‘

Babies are happy when you play with them and talk to them’

Theme 2: The Outdoors and the Community

Children’s artwork depicted various settings and services within the community that are important in babies’ lives. Their feedback highlighted the importance of these services which they described as making baby feel ‘safe’ and ‘happy’.

‘There should be crèches and play groups for the baby to make new friends’

‘It needs a park so the mammy, daddy and nanna can take have fresh air and go for walks’

‘It should have enough houses for everyone’

Theme 3: Health & Safety

Children’s artwork depicts several references to health and safety in the community with traffic lights and zebra crossings featuring prominently, as well as cars, car seats, stairgates, the local doctor and the Community Garda. Fire was illustrated in a number of pictures and referred to in feedback sessions.

‘It needs to make sure that all the cars have proper car seats’ ‘It needs Gardaí in the area to keep it safe especially from fast cars’

‘No fires or things that can hurt them’

Themes from all the various consultations we do, continue to produce results in relation to

- Parental stress and capacity
- The importance of relationships, the presence of love, family and professionals who have had a positive impact.
- The importance of availability of high quality supports
- The availability, quality, size and proximity of housing
- The importance of outdoor space, green spaces, places to play, and to be as children such as the library.
- Access to public transport in particular the availability, connectivity and proximity of bus routes
- Safety in the home, in terms of healthy relationships, safe equipment, fire, stairgates etc
- Safety in the community, the speed and dangers of cars.
- Access to timely early intervention and primary health care services.

Wider research and evidence that is well documented, tells us that poverty and in particularly child poverty increases the risk of adverse childhood experiences and trauma. The Cork City Health and Social Profile, 2018 demonstrates the multidimensional nature of poverty and deprivation, this also applies and impacts children and exacerbates the issues that emerge locally that people are telling us about. So, as well as the everyday experience of children and families, the wider policy, system and environment is a factor influencing children's development, wellbeing and participation.

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General:

All areas of policy within the plan and within the yearly implementation plans must consider the needs, rights and participation of all children. Including those who are marginalised through poverty, health, education and development. Policy and planning must also include neurodiversity. It must also include those who are non-verbal and preverbal.

Chapter 3: Delivering Homes and Communities;

Delivering Homes, pp. 75 -81

Children must be visible in the housing section.

Insertion of a specific objective for needs and inclusion of all children and their families. Quality, availability, proximity of housing is a significant factor for reducing parental stress, increasing child development opportunities, engagement in education and social participation.

In particular we wish to see the inclusion here of children who experience poverty and marginalisation, including Traveller children, migrant children, and those relocating from direct provision; those with health conditions which are exacerbated by poor housing such as children with respiratory conditions.

Delivering Inclusive Communities; We are fully supportive of the Children and Young People objective 3.61, p.83.

Chapter 4 Transport & Mobility pp. 103 -141

New Development in areas served by High Quality Public Transport Objective 4.75

- **This must include The Meadows area North of Knocknaheeny, which requires bus services urgently to provide accessibility to growing number of residents.**
- **Bus services need to connect across the northwest area of the city to the Primary Care Centre on Bakers Road**

- An access point from Knocknaheeny Roundabout to the Primary Care Centre needs to be urgently created, especially since community, health and social care services have now relocated to the premises.
- More flexible bus routes from the Northside need to be created to and from Health, Arts, Culture and community service provision in the city centre, for all children and young people to access.

Chapter 6: Blue and Green Infrastructure, Open Space and Diversity pp. 163 – 214

Trees & Urban Woodland: Objective 6.5 p. 207

With significant urban development associated mostly with housing and mobility infrastructure in the Northwest area of Cork City, it is very important that alongside this, landscaping, tree planting and biodiversity is incorporated. The health and wellbeing benefits are well documented. It has been observed by the LGT team that new estates constructed in the last 15 years across the Northside, do not have sufficient planting or design with this regard. And with the absence of front gardens in current design, the public realm consideration to this is increasingly more important.

Objectives 6.17 to 6.20 pp. 211-212

These objectives must specifically refer to children (including infants and young children) young people, their parents and caregivers.

They must include positive safety planning measures, so ensure open spaces and recreational facilities can be utilised by all ages and abilities and interests.

Considering that play does not only occur with the presence of “playgrounds”. Open spaces should facilitate free, child led play, connection and interaction with parents and caregivers and the environment around them.

A full assessment and re-evaluation of Kilmore Park should take place and urgently bring back suitable appropriate infrastructure and landscaping for ALL ages and abilities and interests. Consultation with children should be a part of this.

Chapter 10: Key Growth Areas and Neighbourhood Development Sites, pp. 207 - 444

There is no mention in this chapter of the Northwest Regeneration MasterPlan, which during the lifetime of this Development Plan will need to be completed and prioritised. This is really important in terms of the longterm experience of children in their community, opportunity for mix tenancies and the overall development of the area.

Objective 13. Hollyhill, 10.327, p. 424.

As well as retail considerations, the development of Hollyhill as an Urban centre requires a full review of the roundabout, and intersection of the two main roads. They are hostile to pedestrians, and the area is becoming a major through road from Blarney to the City, with

no benefit locally. Children have a sense of the risk associated with the presence, volume and speed of cars, which should be addressed through a traffic management strategy. The area needs landscaping and become much more child, family and public friendly in general. The use of high metal fencing, needs to end, and a more respectful, design approach to be built upon.

References

Cork City Profile 2018; A Statistical and Geographical Profile of Cork City Local Authority Area Focused on Health and Social Inclusion:

<https://corkhealthycities.com/publications/cork-city-profile-2018/>

Let's Grow Together! Infant & Childhood Partnerships CLG "Many Voices" Report (2021)

<https://letsgrowtogether.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Many-Voices-of-Lets-Grow-Together.pdf>

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Marmot (2010). Fair society, healthy lives. The Marmot Review. Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England post-2010. Available from: www.gov.uk

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on children and families involved in Let's Grow Together! Infant & Childhood Partnerships CLG" -Forthcoming Publication

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