



Review of County/City Development Board Strategies in 2005



Dermot McCarthy,
Secretary General
Dept. of the
Taoiseach

The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dick Roche T.D., has asked that each of the 34 County and City Development Boards undertake a review of their Strategies.

A key objective of the work of CDB's has been to ensure better co-ordination of services at a local level. Fingal Development Board has done a lot of good work in this area but it's now time to review progress, and where necessary, to refocus priorities.

To commence the review process the Board met for a half day on the 16th February and with the assistance of Sean O'Riordain of ERM Consulting discussed everything that has been done to date from a number of points of view. It was agreed that the key question is: **Has the work of the Board to date succeeded in making a visible difference to the economic, social and cultural development of Fingal?**

The Board invited the Secretary General of the Department of the Taoiseach Dermot McCarthy, himself a Fingallian, to participate in the day as a keynote speaker. In his address Mr. McCarthy said that Ireland has a very successful economy but that it is also a highly vulnerable one, and while we cannot change the inheritance of history we can and must manage our affairs more smartly and County Development Boards are one method of doing that.

In a wide-ranging speech Mr. McCarthy said that co-ordination counts for very little; what we should be aiming for is integration. Co-ordination between organisations tends to leave the 'silo mentality' in place while integration requires interaction at all kinds of levels, in the best interests of the end users of services or plans — the public.

He acknowledged that moving away from narrow remits and engaging in more sustained cross cutting operations is a major challenge, saying that what we need is a better sense of what is possible by working this way. Some of the more complex challenges facing us today require several agencies working together if we are to make a real difference. "It is important to bear in mind that policy failure brings a high price" he added.

From various contributions by Board members, Mr. McCarthy was left in no doubt of the sense of success, but also the sense of frustration felt by the Board in carrying out it's remit. The issue of centralised programming and the lack of flexibility in Budgets being a case in point.

FDB is to prepare and agree a work programme for this review, a copy of which is to be furnished to the Department by end April 2005. The review will continue towards the autumn of 2005.

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Foreign Direct Investment continues to grow in Fingal

There was significant growth in Foreign Direct Investment in Fingal last year. The following list – courtesy of IDA Ireland – gives details of major investments in the county in 2004:

- **Kellogg's** have established a new European Operations Centre at Airside, Swords (formally opened 20th January 2005) which will support all Kellogg's operations throughout Europe. It will create 80 jobs in Finance, Marketing, Human Resources and Supply Chain Management.
- **Hartford Financial Services Group**, one of the largest financial services and insurance

companies in the U S , will employ approximately 130 people over the next five years at Swords Business Campus - to date approximately 30 positions have been filled.

- **Bell Labs (Lucent Technologies)** - a €69 million Research & Development Investment Programme between Bell Labs, IDA and Science Foundation Ireland. The Bell Labs Centre will be located at Lucent's facility on IDA Blanchardston Industrial Estate and will be the global headquarters for research into telecommunications and supply chain technologies.

- **IBM and IDA** agreed a €22 million investment to significantly develop its Irish Research and Development Software facility in Airways, Santry (a.k.a. Lotus). The introduction of new competencies in software research for leading-edge technologies will move it into critical core development work for IBM 's global software business.

[Link to the FDB Strategy](#)

Action 4.2.5

"...encouraging foreign direct investment in Fingal"

Fingal County Childcare Committee launches "Census and Assessment of Childcare Facilities and Services in Fingal"

The Fingal County Childcare Committee "Census and Assessment of Childcare Facilities and Services in Fingal County" was launched on the 20th January 2005 by the Minister Brian Lenihan (Minister for State with responsibility for Children).

The report carried out by the Committee was funded under the NDP Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme, to oversee the development and provision of adequate and appropriate childcare in Fingal.

The report found the number of full day care facilities has almost doubled since 1999 and there was also a 30% increase in sessional facilities. The key areas of concern arising out of this report include

- Growth in Population Projections in Fingal.
- Childcare Fees
- Operational costs for providers
- Opening Hours/Days/Weeks of opening of services particularly for sessional services.
- Lack of childcare for the under 12 months age group.
- Balance between large and small scale providers.
- Poor take up/lack of Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme applicants in Fingal.
- The need for more community Childcare Facilities, particularly in the Swords area.

The County Childcare Committee have now put in place a workplan for 2005, which will begin to address many of these issues. A

forum of key stakeholders is to be established which will look at the findings of the census and work to address these issues within their own organisational workplans.

The report also includes a Directory of Childcare Services for the Fingal Area which should assist parents when considering childcare options.

For further information contact the Fingal County Childcare Committee at 01 890 5027 or visit www.fingalcountychildcare.ie

[Link to the FDB Strategy](#)

Action 4.4.1

"...the creation of full-time childcare places"

Action 1.2.8

"To fast-track the processing of planning applications for creches"

Proposed new Postcodes will assist Identity and Data Gathering

The Commission for Communication Regulations (ComReg) was set up by the Government to regulate the various Communications industries: postal, electronic and telephones. The Regulator's office published a report in January making the case for the introduction of postcodes in Ireland.

This would entail the abandonment of the present postcode system. These postcodes are administered solely by An Post and are fraught with problems. Even on a local level we have seen Dublin 9 gradually spill into Fingal, and Dublin 15 move into County Meath. There was even some confusion over where the dividing line between Malahide and Swords sits. The main problems, however, are that An Post have resisted any proposals to align the Postcodes with the County boundaries as a result of the 1993 Local Government Act. Thus, Fingal is still known as County Dublin and is composed of Dublin 15, and parts of Dublin postcodes 9, 11 and 17. In the press release, that accompanied the launch of the study the Chairperson of ComReg, Isolde Goggin said "The evidence from other countries demonstrates that the use of postcodes can contribute to competitiveness and

national development. ComReg also believes that it is possible to introduce a system of postcodes that will not affect historical and traditional townland names, particularly in rural areas."

Among those who have expressed their support for postcodes are Utility providers such as the ESB who believe that more localised postcodes will improve the response times for fixing faults, and ESRI who believe that the public service agencies who use data will be able to plan and profile local areas in a much more dynamic way and provide more relevant services.

The Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources established a broad based Working Group to develop a business case and implementation plan for the introduction of a public postcode system. ComReg estimate that this phase should be completed within 4 to 6 months. The report recommends that a detailed feasibility study be undertaken in relation to the introduction of post-codes.

[Link to the FDB Strategy](#)

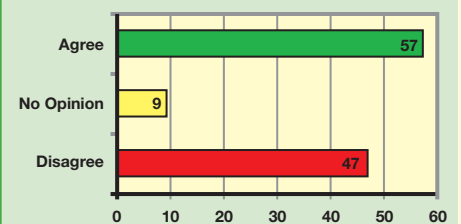
Action 1.1.4

"...all Agencies delivering services in the county to adopt structures and keep data to a Fingal base."

Public Support for Fingal County Identity Tested

The FDB website Vox Pop asked visitors to consider whether they prefer the term 'Fingal' over 'North County Dublin'.

The results are surprising given the public scepticism in the past about 'County Fingal'. However, it does show that calling this area 'County Fingal' has some popularity.



It may be that support for 'County Fingal' is artificially high because those two use 'Fingal' websites may be more receptive to the notion of 'County Fingal'.

In total 113 people voted in the poll, out of 2,400 visitors to the site since mid-January which works out at under 5% of the web traffic.

[Link to the FDB Strategy](#)

Goal 3.1.1

"That County Fingal will be recognised as a distinct county nationally"

Community Support Programme continue to expand

The local Community Services Unit of FÁS have informed the Social Inclusion Monitoring Committee of the fact that the Community Support Programmes are continuing to expand. Community Support Programmes include Community Employment, Social Economy, Jobs Clubs and Local Training Initiatives.

An additional 30 places were filled by Fingal people between November and March which represents a 3.5% increase. National Policy on these programmes remains the same as the last update. Community Employment is likely to expand while Social Economy and Jobs Initiative schemes will begin to fade away.

Amharc Fhine Gall II

A second exhibition of artistic talent in the Fingal area, show cases a selection of 9 craft artists working in a variety of media including ceramic, jewellery, wood and lace. The exhibition is hosted in Draíocht – Centre for the Arts, Blanchardstown from February 3 - March 27, 2005

Focus on Balbriggan: FDB Mapping

The Fingal Development Board has produced several maps to date. Continuing this series we decided to take a look at more detailed, localised maps to show the full potential of GIS. The map on the right shows a selection of facilities (Sports, Community, Health Centre, and Post Office) in Balbriggan. The present level of facilities will be put under considerable pressure by the projected population growth. For instance the 2002 population of 11,132 is likely to exceed 18,000 by 2011.

A major development in Balbriggan will be the relocation of the main operations of Drogheda Port to the northern fringe (Bremore) of the town. The site is a perfect deep water location. This move will allow Drogheda Port Company to expand commercially, which it could not do in its present location. As a consequence there will be employment opportunities for local people. The proposals for the Port are included in the draft provisions of the Fingal County Development Plan. The Department of Foreign Affairs recently opened a Passport Office near Balbriggan Town Centre. This will eventually, accommodate 120 staff. This decision is indicative of the improvement of state funded services in the town.



Taking a look at Balbriggan (map on left) from a different point of view we can see that there are different levels of population density in the three electoral districts. The urban DED area has 3,128 people per sq. km. This is much denser than Balscadden (35 people per sq. km.) and Balbriggan Rural (170 people per sq.km.). The national average density is somewhat lower at 51 people per sq. km. However the Europewide average is much higher at 142 per sq. km. Higher densities are not popular in Ireland, yet they are vital if transportation is to work properly. The State's economic think-tank ESRI, as well as the National Spatial Strategy indicate that there are social and economic competitiveness costs associated with continued low density development. For Balbriggan some of these principles are reflected in the Draft County Development Plan. The plan suggests that appropriate residential developments (Objective RS) are located in certain areas of the town. These effectively are infills which will help to make the town more compact and will improve the situation with densities into the future.

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