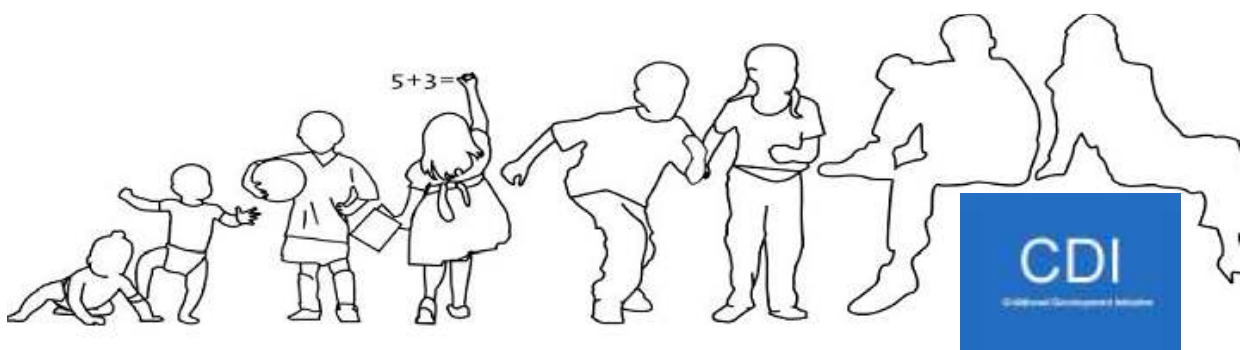


# Mac Uillium Needs Assessment

March 2010



Meeting needs, making changes, improving outcomes

**Tallaght West Childhood Development Initiative Ltd**  
St Mark's Family and Community Centre, Cookstown Lane, Fettercairn, Dublin 24  
T (01) 494 0030 F (01) 462 7329 E [info@twcdi.ie](mailto:info@twcdi.ie) W [www.twcdi.ie](http://www.twcdi.ie)

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## Acknowledgements

CDI gratefully acknowledge the help and support of South Dublin County Council in the production of this report. A big thank you goes to the residents of Mac Uilliam estate for their time and energy in completing questionnaires and to the Residents Associations of Oaklee and Mac Uilliam for their assistance in getting questionnaires filled in. Thanks also to the members of the Safe and Healthy Place Committee (see Appendix 1), and particularly to those members that went door-to-door to get questionnaires filled in.

## Introduction

The Childhood Development Initiative (CDI) in Tallaght West began as a planning initiative in 2003 to support better outcomes for children in Tallaght West. A consortium of 23 members representing community leaders, residents and professionals working in Tallaght West developed the outcomes-focused 10-year strategy *A Place for Children*. Based on this long-term strategy, a detailed implementation plan was agreed for 2007-2011, against which a major investment of €15 million has been made. This investment is co-funded by The Atlantic Philanthropies and the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, through its Prevention and Early Intervention Fund.

The Safe and Healthy Place initiative is a strategic and proactive response to the South Dublin County Development Board's 10-year strategy, *A Place for People*. Through both its' core services and working with the RAPID programme in Tallaght West, South Dublin County Council (SDCC) invested considerable resources towards making the area 'a healthier place', 'a safe place' and 'a place to live' – all key aims of the CDB strategy. However, baseline research undertaken by CDI indicated that many children and families still suffered from the effects of poor environmental and neighbourhood conditions.<sup>1</sup> Since publication of that research, SDCC developed a partnership with CDI and this initiative is the result of the two partners working together to create a child-centred family-friendly neighbourhood for Tallaght West – 'a safe and healthy place'.

The Safe and Healthy Place proposal was brought to, and approved by, the Children's Services Committee, under the auspices of its' Safe and Secure Sub-Committee. Activities under this Initiative that were agreed and approved are included at Appendix 3.

Mac Uilliam is the most recent housing development in Tallaght West and consists of a total of 360 homes in a mixture of houses, maisonettes and apartments. While 50 apartments are owned and managed by Oaklee Housing Association, the remainder

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<sup>1</sup> *How Are Our Kids? Children & Families in Tallaght West, Co. Dublin*, The Childhood Development Initiative and Dartington Social Research Unit (2004).

are owned and managed by SDCC. The original plan for the estate was to build 700+ public and private housing units in total, and to provide appropriate facilities such as playgrounds, playing fields and shops in the future development. However, the economic downturn brought the full development of Mac Uilliam to a halt due to a lack of funding, leaving SDCC in the difficult position of having an unfinished housing estate to manage.

In recognition of the fact that the unfinished nature of the estate is in itself a major stress on the residents of Mac Uilliam, and being aware that a high proportion of Mac Uilliam residents are families with young children, CDI's Safe and Healthy Place Committee undertook to conduct a survey of the needs of Mac Uilliam residents. This report explains the process used to conduct the survey and presents the results that have been gathered. It concludes by outlining agreements made by service providers when presented with the draft report and the next steps for the work of the Safe and Healthy Place Committee in relation to Mac Uilliam estate.

## **Methodology**

In 2008, Barnardos, in conjunction with An Cosán, carried out a needs assessment of Mac Uilliam prior to establishing its' early years service in the area. They did so in order to ensure their service would be adequate to the needs of the population. Building on the information gathered, CDI held focus group meetings in April 2009 with the service providers who took part in the Barnardos' survey, to discuss the wider needs emerging on the estate.

With the establishment of the Safe and Healthy Place Committee and in light of the fact that a number of new housing allocations took place in Mac Uilliam during the Summer of 2009, it was agreed to carry out a further needs assessment that would update the information from service providers and consult with residents about the needs of the area.

The Needs Assessment was organised and conducted by the Safe and Healthy Place Committee and the group began by consulting with a wide range of service providers about their engagement with residents in Mac Uilliam (see Appendix 2). A questionnaire was then devised by the Committee and five members conducted door-to-door interviews with residents. While each street in the estate was included, households within a street were selected randomly. A number of questionnaires were also completed by parents of children attending Barnardos and by members of the Oaklee and Mac Uilliam Residents Association. Five questionnaires were also completed by members of the Travelling community.

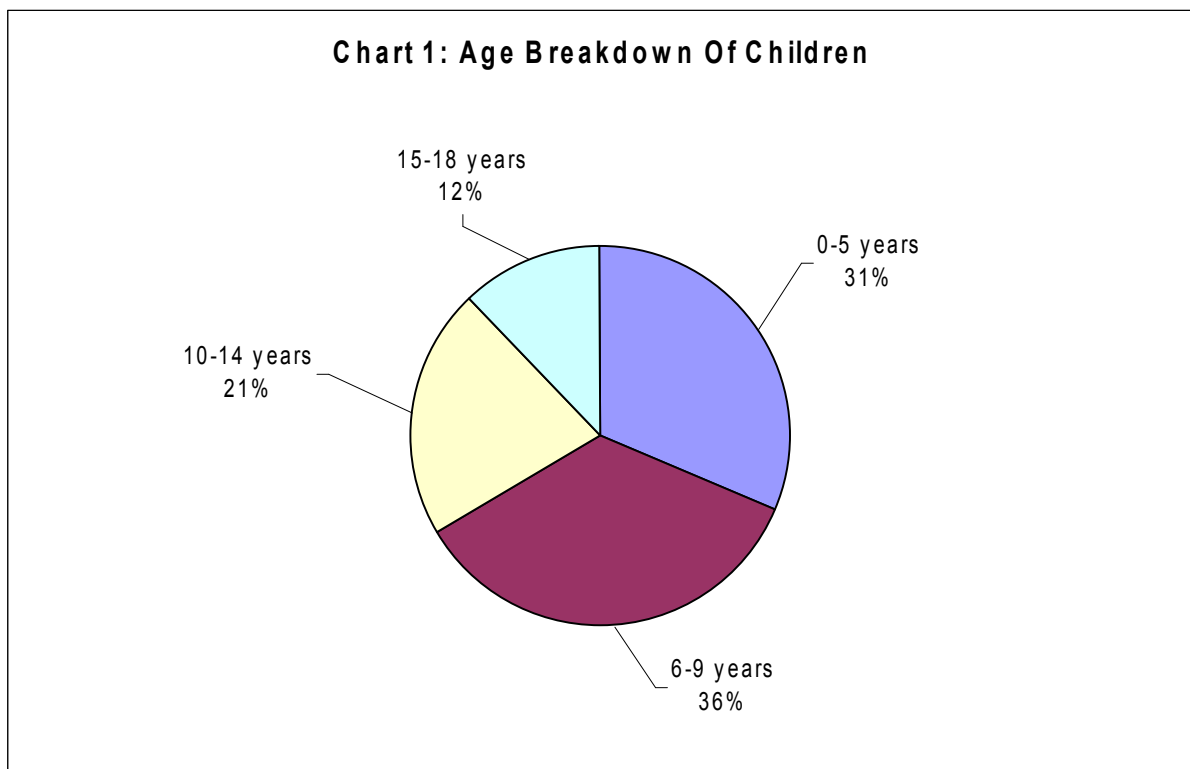
The survey was conducted in November and early December 2009, and a total of 71 households out of 348 completed questionnaires at this time. The information for this Needs Assessment is therefore based on a sample of 20% of the residents of Mac Uilliam, providing a fair representation of the profile and needs of the area.

## Consultation with Service Providers

50 service providers completed short questionnaires in which individual agency staff were asked to explain any work that they are currently doing in the area. Service providers were asked if they had observed any changes in the area since taking part in the Barnardos survey in 2008, and to identify any unmet needs.

## Population Profile

Mac Uilliam currently houses 300 families in housing units managed by SDCC, and 48 in housing units managed by Oaklee Housing Association. These families have a total of 715 children aged 18 years and younger among them.



It was noted by a number of people conducting this survey that there are people from a range of different countries living in Mac Uilliam and that English was not the first language for some people who were asked to complete the survey. Figures provided by South Dublin County Council staff show that almost half (45%) of residents of Council housing on the estate are from outside of Ireland. Oaklee Housing

Association estimates that of its 48 households, 25% are headed by non-Irish nationals.

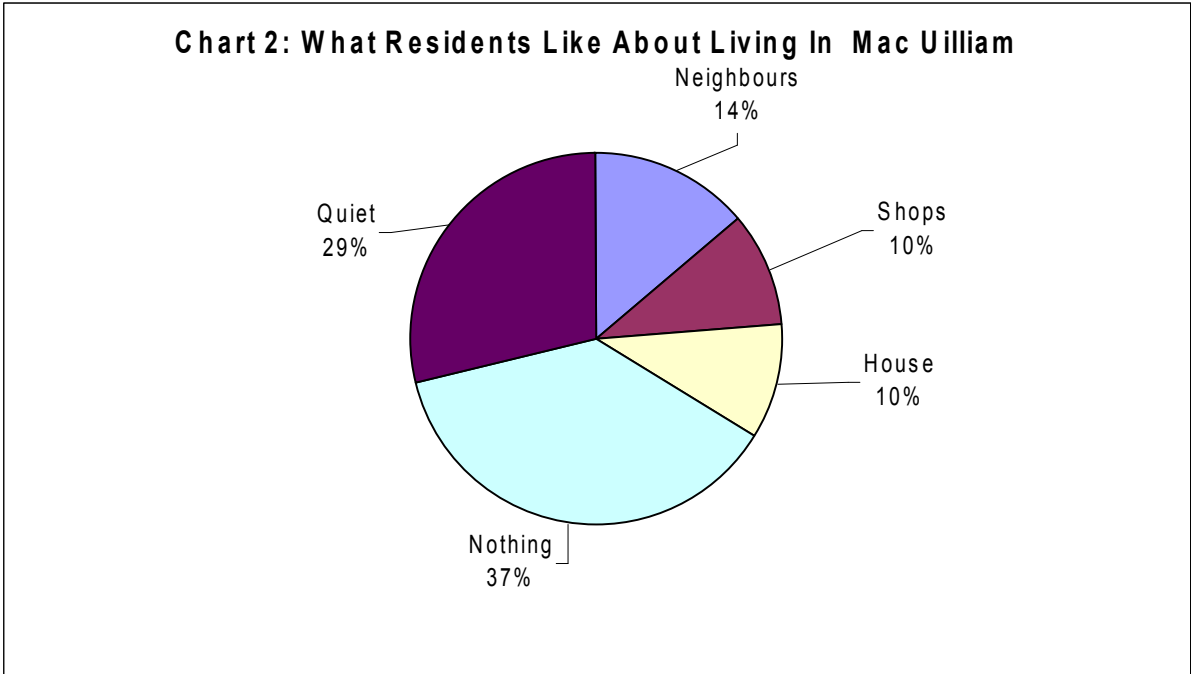
The Council has information about the country of origin of about half of the residents of Mac Uilliam who are from outside Ireland, which reveals that there are people from at least 24 different countries residing in the estate. There are also 17 Traveller families living in Mac Uilliam.

### Findings

This section outlines the residents' responses to the questionnaire. They were asked a total of 9 questions and the following responses were made.

#### What Residents Like About Living In Mac Uilliam

The first question was to ask residents what they like about living in the Mac Uilliam estate.



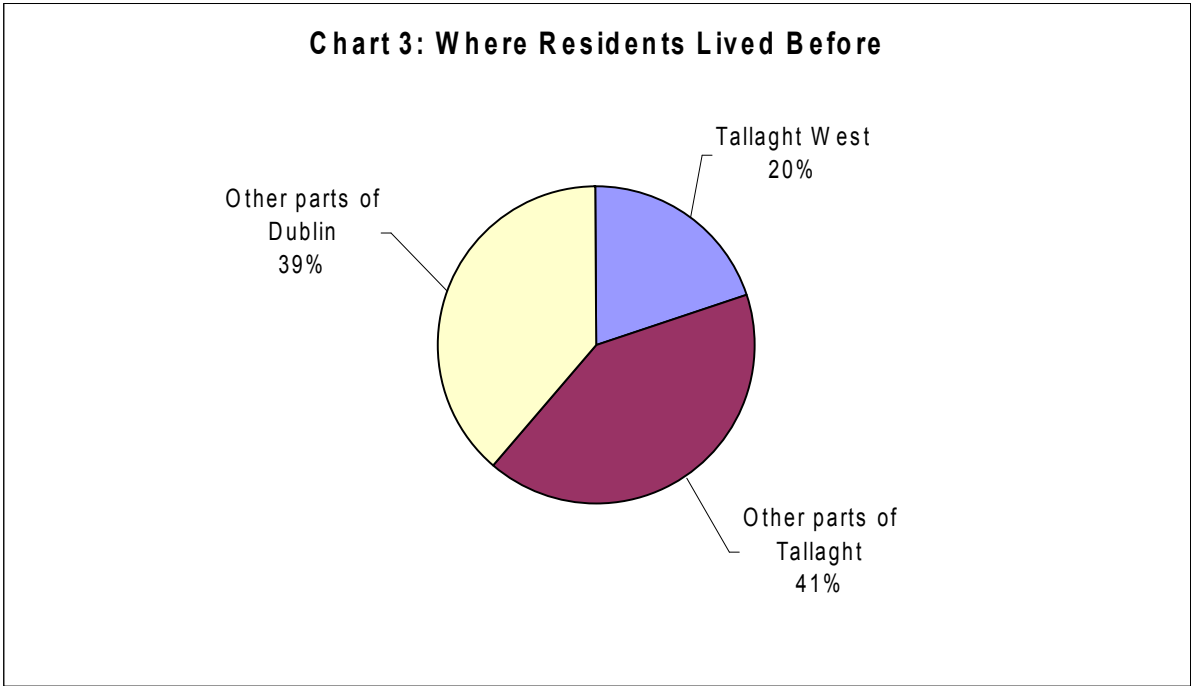
A large minority (i.e. 37%) of residents say they like nothing about living in the area. However, most residents have something positive to say – 29% like the fact that the



area is quiet; 14% like having nice neighbours; and equal proportions (i.e. 10%) of residents report liking their house and the location of the shopping centres.

**Where Residents Lived Before**

As can be seen in Chart 3 the large majority (i.e. 61%) of residents surveyed lived in other areas of Tallaght before moving to their home in Mac Uilliam.

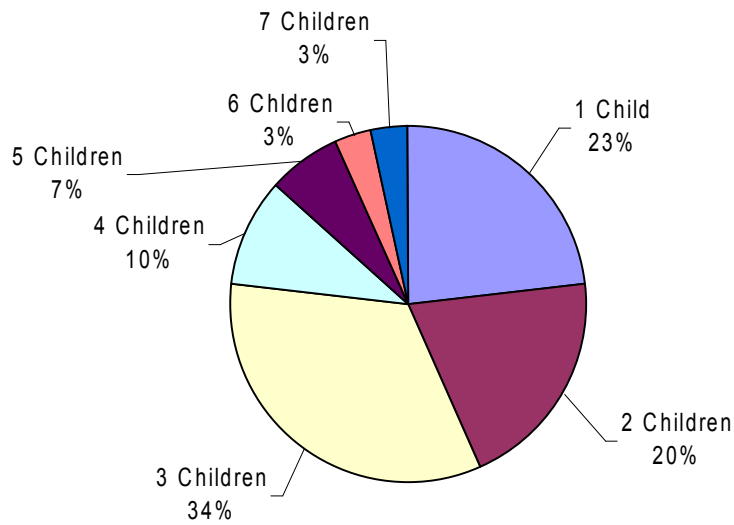


The remaining 39% lived outside of Tallaght prior to living in Mac Uilliam, indicating that a large minority of residents may not be familiar with Tallaght and the services available in the area.

**Numbers Of Children Per Household**

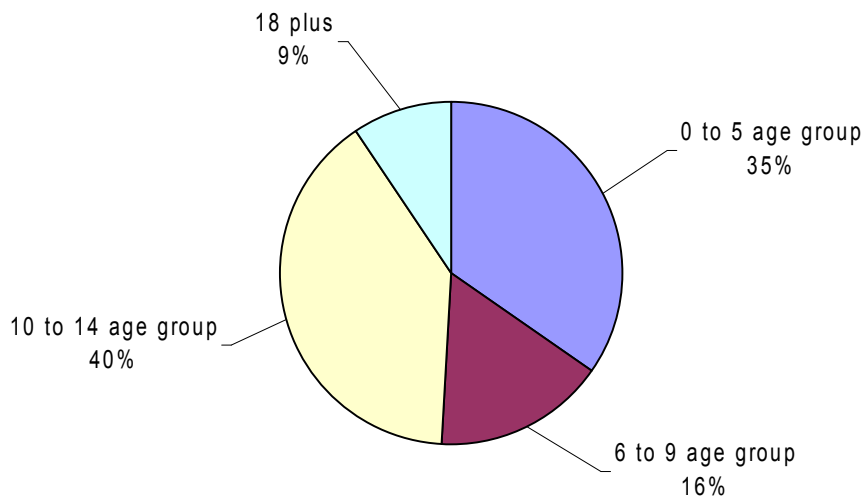
Residents were asked if any children lived in the house, and if so, how many. This question revealed that the largest group of households with children consist of families with one child (i.e. 36%). Altogether, the vast majority of families with children who were surveyed (i.e. 92%) have four or fewer children living in the house, while 8% of families have five or more children in the house.

**Chart 4: Numbers Of Children Per Household**



**Age Range of Children In Households Surveyed**

**Chart 5: Age Range of Children In Households Surveyed**

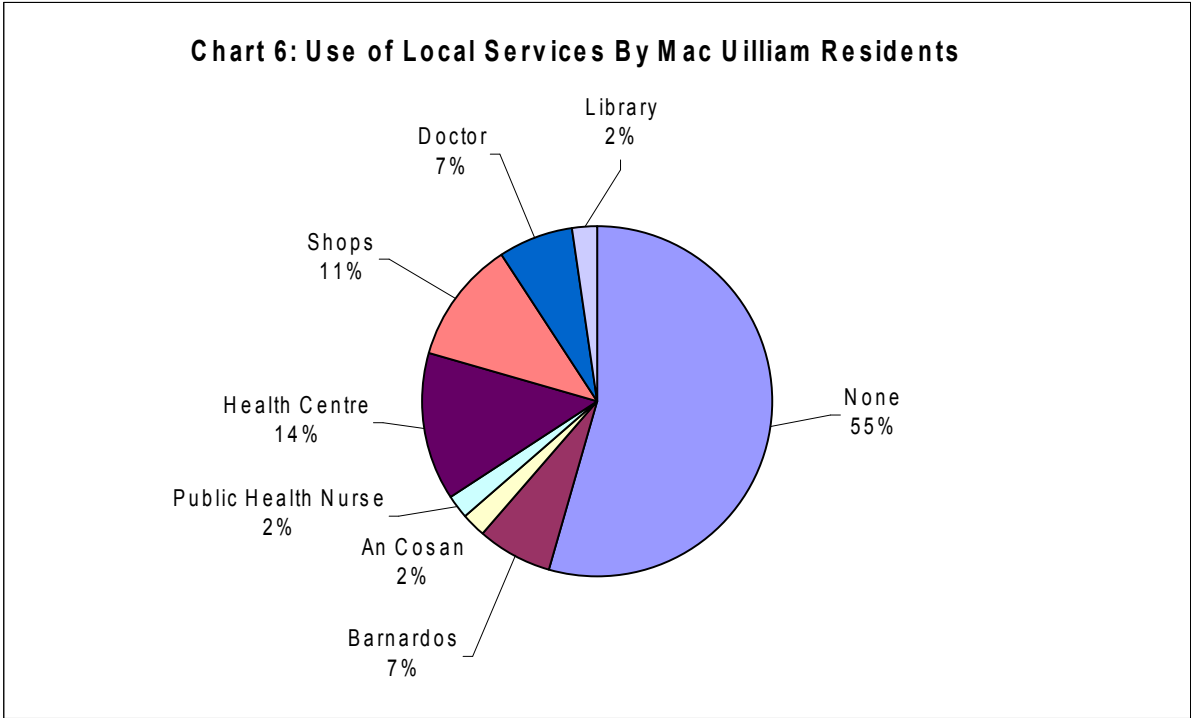


In line with South Dublin County Council figures this question revealed that the vast majority of children living in Mac Uilliam, i.e. 90%, are aged 14 years or younger. Of these, the two largest cohorts in the household surveyed are aged 0-5 years (32%) and 10-14 years (41%),

It is important to point out here that staff at Barnardos note they have anecdotally observed that more families from the area that have been seeking their services are both larger and younger than indicated by the information gathered in the survey. They are seeing families with 10 or more children and a greater proportion of children aged 5 years or younger.

**Use of Local Services By Mac Uilliam Residents**

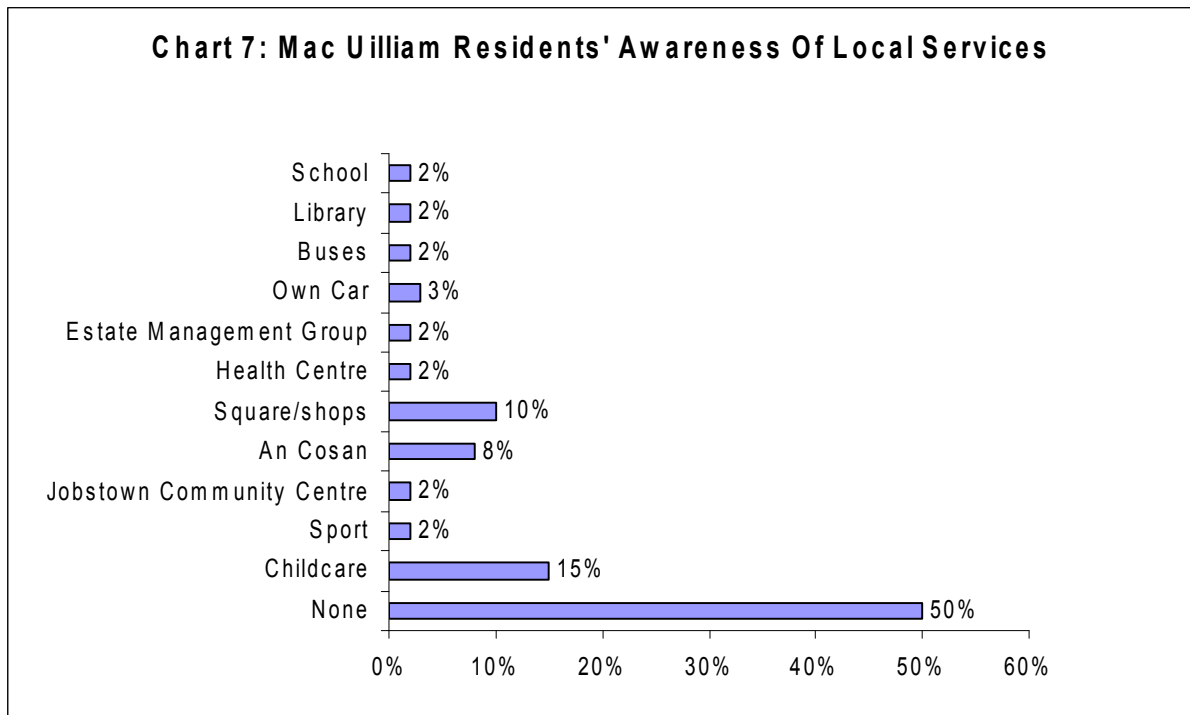
Questions 5, 6 and 7 concerned residents’ knowledge and use of local services. The surveyors felt that there was a lack of clarity about what exactly a ‘service’ was and for this reason the results of these three questions should be interpreted with caution. Residents were asked which, if any, services they use in the area. More than half (60%) say they do not use any services in the area, while 10% say that they use services from the area that they lived in before moving to Mac Uilliam.



The local services mentioned most often as being used by Mac Uilliam residents are the local shops, the Health Centre, Barnardos, the Library and Schools.

## Mac Uilliam Residents' Awareness Of Local Services

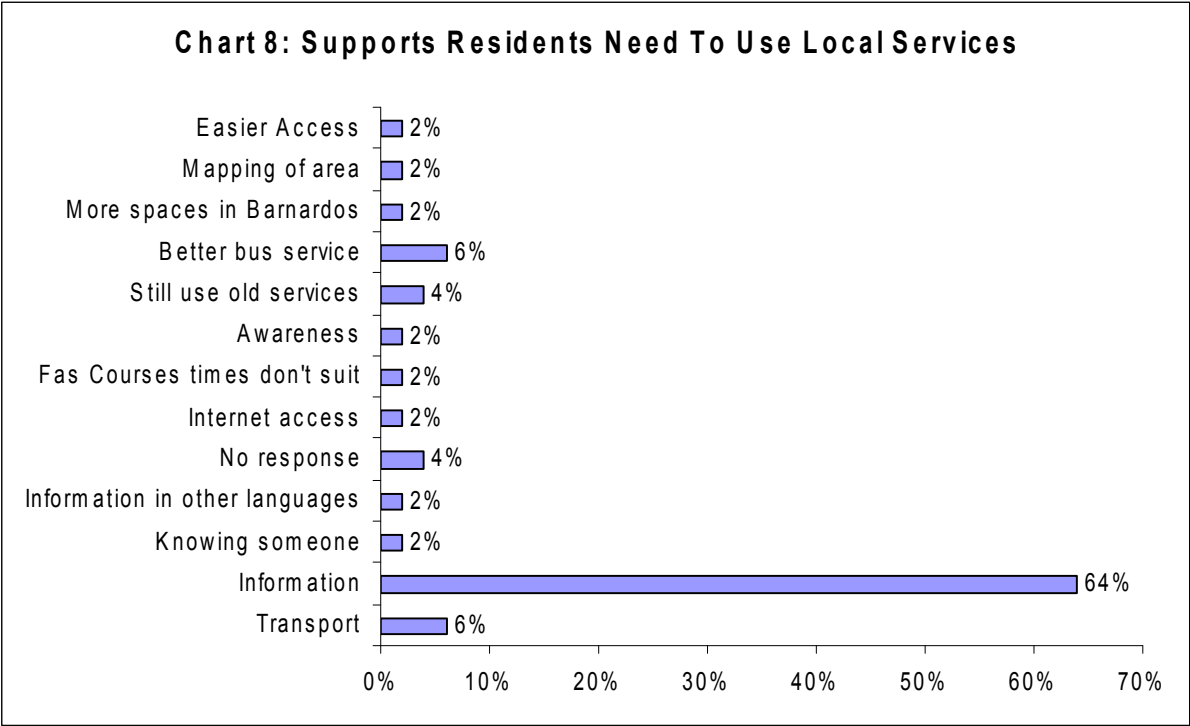
Residents were asked which, if any, services they know about:



Fully half of those surveyed (50%) say that they are unaware of any services in the area. Again, it must be noted that some of those conducting the survey felt there was confusion as to what was meant by 'services' when this question was asked. This result may also be due to those who say they are unaware of any services having only lived in the area a short time. Whatever the reason for this high level of unawareness, it is important that a substantial lack of knowledge be addressed as soon as possible. This is further emphasised by the response of residents to the next question in the survey.

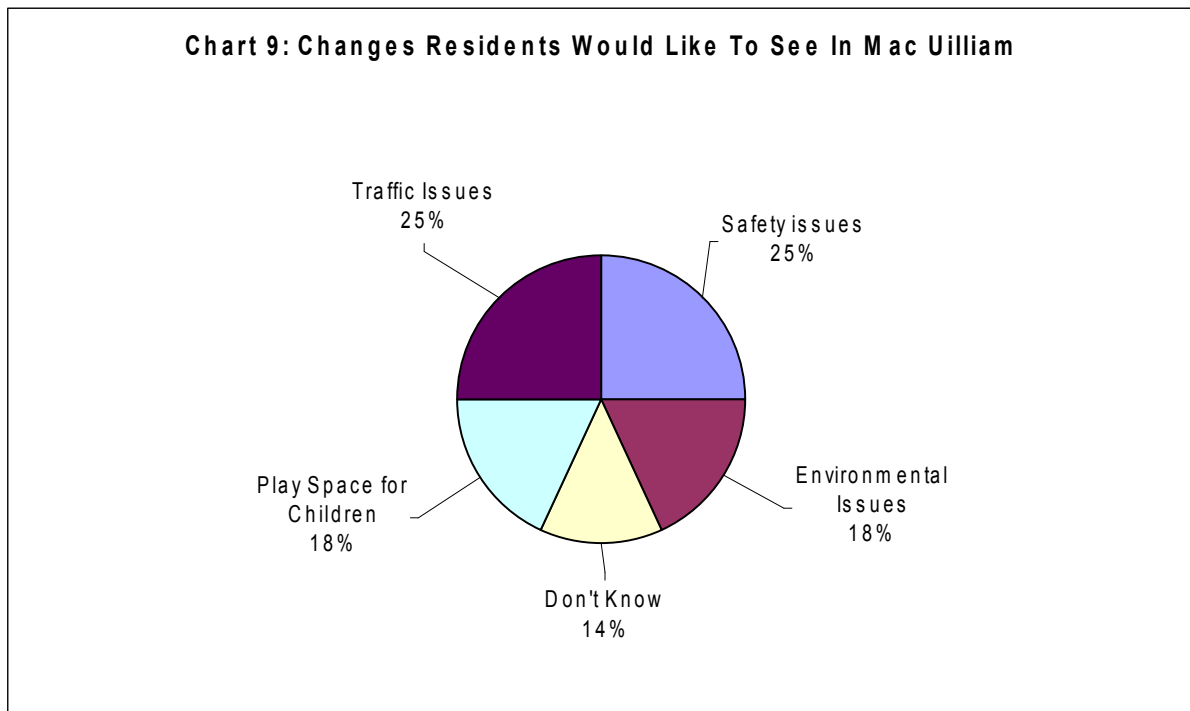
### Supports Residents Need To Use Local Services

Residents were asked to explain what would help them to access and use services in the area. As can be seen from the chart below, by far the biggest obstacle in the use of services is a lack of information, which is named as an issue by 64% of residents. Transport issues are the next main issue, with 12% of residents saying transport or a better bus service will help them to use services.



## Changes Residents Would Like To See In Mc Uilliam

Residents were asked what changes they would like to see to their neighbourhood.



A quarter of those surveyed (25%) regard safety-related issues as the most urgent change needed. These include:

- Addressing anti-social behaviour;
- Improving Garda response time;
- Providing proper fencing;
- Installing more CCTV;
- Ensuring dog owners are more vigilant; and;
- Putting an end to racism.

A further quarter of residents surveyed named traffic-related issues as the change they would like to see. These include more car parking spaces; installing speed ramps; improving sign posting; putting a “Lolly Pop Lady” in place in lieu of providing a pedestrian crossing on the main road; and the provision of an efficient bus service.

18% of those surveyed want environmental issues in the estate addressed, including dealing with dumping; having the area cleaned up; and improving bin collections.

18% identify the need for play spaces for the children while 14% don't suggest any changes.

### **Awareness Of The Residents Association**

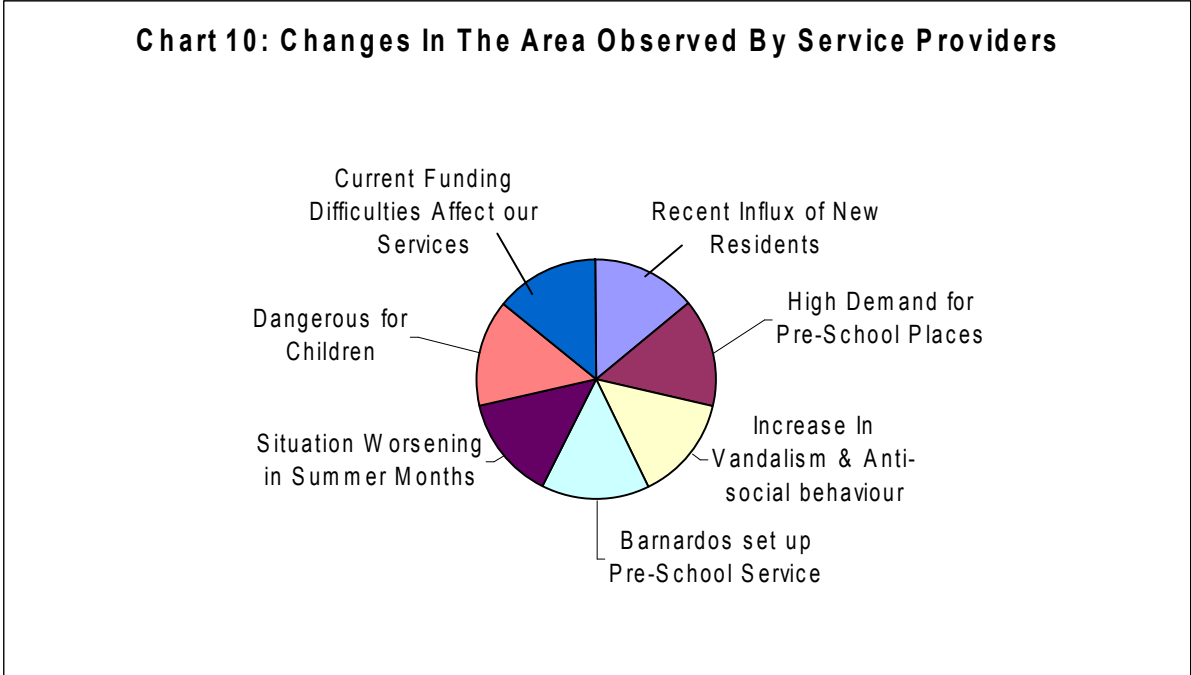
The final question asked of people being surveyed was whether they had heard of their Residents Association, 30% of the residents are aware of the Residents Association, 36% said they are unaware of it and 33% did not respond to this question. 24% of those surveyed expressed an interest in being involved in voluntary work to solve local problems providing it fit in with their schedules. In addition, 18% of those surveyed expressed an interest in joining the Residents Association, 12% say they did not wish to be involved and 70% did not respond to this question.

**Findings from Survey of Service Providers:**

In March 2008, when Barnardos and An Cosán conducted their assessment of needs in Mac Uilliam with service providers, a high level of need had been observed in the area and service providers were particularly concerned about the following issues:

- Isolation of families with young children;
- Low levels of uptake of services by residents in Mac Uilliam; and
- Poor co-ordination between agencies in planning and delivering services for the area.

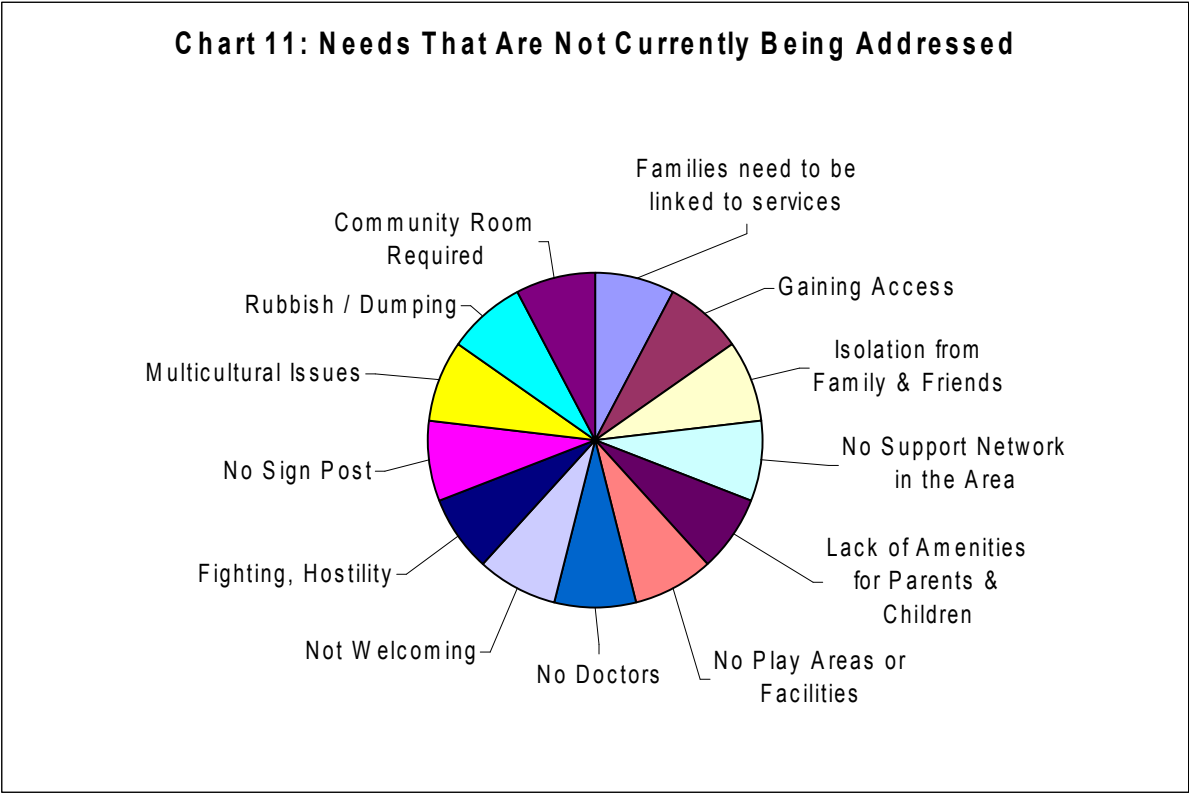
Recent changes that service providers report seeing in Mac Uilliam are summarised in the following chart.



As can be seen above, the only positive recent change identified by service providers is the setting up of the Barnardos early years service.



Service providers were also asked if they are aware of any needs that are not being addressed in Mac Uilliam.



It is clear from this chart that personnel in the agencies providing services in Tallaght are very concerned about residents in Mac Uilliam estate. The needs that they identify as unmet also match the needs identified by residents, as they are largely concerned with safety and environmental issues, local supports for families, and facilities for children and young people.

## Next Steps

The Safe & Healthy Place Committee drafted a report on the Needs Assessment and organised a meeting on January 10<sup>th</sup> 2010 to which service providers were invited. All of the main service providers were in attendance i.e. CDI, South Dublin County Council, HSE, Barnardos, Dodder Valley Partnership, Tallaght Youth Service, Daughters of Charity Family Centre. Apologies were received from the Gardaí, Jobstown RAPID, and the FAI. The meeting discussed the draft report of the Needs Assessment and agreed a series of actions in response to the issues raised in the report. These are outlined in the following table:

<b>Actions Agreed:</b>			
<b>Issue:</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Lead Agency</b>
Play Space	Green space to be levelled and grassed	Spring 2010	SDCC
Safe positive activities	FAI training programme for coaches	Spring 2010	FAI
Safe positive activities	Youth leadership training for adults	To be confirmed	TYS
Safe positive activities	Targeted project for young people – could be Graffiti/Mural Wall project as this was already suggested by residents	Easter	TYS along with SDCC (Parks & Housing Depts) and Partnership
Safe positive activities	ASB monthly 'clinic' in Barnardos	Spring	Gardaí (CDI to follow this up)
Environment	'Community Spirit' Project: Area Cleanup, levelling of green area fronting Fortunestown Lane	To be confirmed	SDCC Parks Dept
Environment	Dog Warden to visit Mac Uilliam regularly	February	SDCC Tony Shaw to speak to warden
Environment	Refuse collection information e.g. how to get extra bin etc	S & H Place Committee 23 <sup>rd</sup> February	SDCC
Information	'Community Spirit' open day, target group adults	Easter/Summer	CDI & Residents
Information	'Community Spirit' open day, target group young people	Easter/Summer	TYS & Residents
Information	Invite residents to nominate 2 reps onto S&H Place Committee	S & H Place Committee 23 <sup>rd</sup> February	CDI
Information	Need update from VEC about provision of English as a Second Language (ESL) training	S & H Place Committee 23 <sup>rd</sup> February	Partnership & HSE
Information	Look at ways to develop web site for area	ASAP	CDI
Information	Investigate possibility of providing internet access in Barnardos	ASAP	Barnardos
Traffic & Transport	Look into the possibility of having Mac Uilliam on bus route	ASAP	Barnardos

CDI then organised a public meeting for residents on the 27<sup>th</sup> of January to discuss the draft report and inform them of the actions agreed by service providers. While attendance at this meeting was low, the residents present were in agreement with the issues outlined in the draft report and expressed interest in being involved in their Residents Association in order to take part in lobbying and activities aimed at improving the physical and social environment of Mac Uilliam. The residents were particularly keen to see facilities and services for children and young people being developed in their area.

## Conclusion

This Needs Assessment reveals a high level of consensus both among residents and between residents and service providers about the issues that urgently need to be addressed in Mac Uilliam. This level of agreement about what needs to be addressed bodes well for residents and the agencies working together to address the needs of the Mac Uilliam community. In addition, it provides a useful baseline for service providers currently working in the area and agencies that are planning to begin providing activities and services. The report will also offer a resource for residents lobbying for improvements in their community as it provides a clear picture of issues that are common across the estate.

The issues raised also give a clear focus for the ongoing work of the Safe and Healthy Place Committee in pursuing a programme of activity intended to address identified issues in Mac Uilliam, alongside the outcomes outlined in CDI's Safe and Healthy Place Strategy as follows,

- Regeneration of a child-centred family-friendly environment;
- Re-focussing of current council resources and community facilities; and
- Continuing to deliver a Common Quality Standard to support outcomes for children (see Appendix 3).

## Members Of Safe And Healthy Place Committee

<b>Safe and Healthy Place Committee Membership November 2009</b>
Marian Quinn (CDI, Committee Chairperson)
Joyce Cahill (CDI)
Francis Chance (Barnardos)
Rachel Rodgers (Barnardos)
Gavin Mulhall (HSE)
Sheilann Monaghan (Tallaght Partnership)
Roseanne Neville (St Brigid's School)
Sergeant Joe O'Connor (Gardaí)
Sinead Hannigan (Gardaí)
Sinead Mslnerney (Gardaí)
Colette Mc Loughlin (HSE)
Niamh Ni Aogain (NEPS)
Billy Coman (SDCC)
Sue Clarke (SDCC)
Tony Shaw (SDCC)
Jean Rafter (NEWB)

## Appendix 2

### Service Providers That Were Surveyed

Organisation	Role/Responsibility
Brookfield Health Centre	Doctors
St Aidan's National School	Home School Liaison
St Vincent De Paul	Service Providers in Mac Uilliam
Youth Horizon's	Manager
St Thomas's School	Home School Community Liaison
St Brigid's National School	Home School Community Liaison
HSE	Childcare Manager
HSE	Social Inclusion Manager
HSE	Social Worker
HSE	Community Worker
HSE	Speech & Language Therapist
HSE	Family Resource Centre Manager
HSE	Community Welfare Officers
HSE	Social Work Team Leader
Rainbow House	Manager
An Cosán	CEO
South Dublin County Council	Housing Officer
South Dublin County Council	Estate Management Officer
South Dublin County Council	Social Worker
South Dublin County Council	Traveller Section
St Aidan's School	Home School Community Liaison
P.A.K.T.	Manager
RAPID	Co-ordinators working in Mac Uilliam
NEWB	Regional Manager
Dodder Valley Partnership	Community Development Coordinator
An Turas	Manager
Barnardos	Manager
Tallaght Women's Refuge	Manager
Killinarden Health Centre	Doctors
Jobstown Community Centre	Manager
Co. Dublin Vocational Education Committee	Education Officer
Gardaí	Community Garda
Women Together Tallaght Network	Manager

The Safe and Healthy Place Initiative was agreed between CDI and South Dublin County Council as part of the CDI strategy “*A Place for Children*”, which is available at [www.twcdi.ie](http://www.twcdi.ie). It was subsequently approved by the Children’s Services Committee and a programme of work was agreed. The Initiative is designed to improve the physical fabric of the area in order to reduce the negative impact on children’s health and well being, as well as their sense of attachment to their community that results from poor neighbourhood and living conditions.

### **Safe And Healthy Place Initiative Activities**

The multi-layered approach to the activities of this initiative is as follows:

#### *Regeneration of a child-centred family-friendly environment:*

- (i) Establishing a baseline by independently auditing existing plans
- (ii) Developing an overall approach to a child-centred family-friendly urban village<sup>2</sup>
- (iii) Engaging the community to work with the Council so that community residents can influence the shape of the overall approach (pt ii) from its origin<sup>3</sup>
- (iv) Committing to an organisation-wide child-centred proofing, now and in the future, of all relevant work programmes and priorities
- (v) Developing links between the CDI strategy and the CONNECT project.<sup>4</sup>

#### *Re-focusing of current council resources and community facilities:*

South Dublin will maximise the value and use of existing resources and facilities to support the implementation of the CDI strategy by providing access to existing resources and facilities where possible. This may include:

- (i) Use of council facilities to deliver new services and programmes
- (ii) Use of South Dublin Sports’ and Arts’ Officers to support outcomes for children
- (iii) Use of library facilities to support programmes and provide valuable resource materials

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<sup>2</sup> South Dublin will develop this approach by engaging 2 public realm designers – one of whom will be specifically focused on Tallaght West – to design, evaluate and implement public realm improvements and infrastructure throughout South Dublin County and who will work with the CDI to develop the ‘child-centred family-friendly urban village’. This will provide the opportunity to develop ‘strategic planning to underpin the activity being progressed in RAPID areas’, to avoid an ‘ad hoc and reactive approach to bringing forward projects’ and to deliver appropriate actions in accordance with this new plan and outcomes sought by this initiative. (Fitzpatrick and Associates, 2006, National Evaluation of RAPID)

<sup>3</sup> This will allow community residents to see the effect of their influence in the plans, and it will also create a model of community engagement with the local authority, a key recommendation of the RAPID evaluation and an important aspect of the learning from the model for other local authorities.

<sup>4</sup> This linkage will assist with communication and dissemination of lessons learned, as well as to promote community engagement with CDI and to assist with the evaluation of the overall strategy, where appropriate, by supporting data collection.

- (iv) Use of CONNECT project, in all its various manifestations, to continue to promote engagement with the CDI and to assist with the communications, engagement and evaluation strategies of the CDI where appropriate.

The on-going work of the RAPID programme will also support the objectives of this initiative, by continuing to promote a child-centred approach and actively engaging with the community to develop various actions funded through Dormant Accounts:

- (i) Environmental programmes to include:
  - a. Work on Anti-Social Behaviour Black Spots;
  - b. Environmental Awareness Programme across the four areas of Tallaght West;
  - c. Environmental Action Programme for Brookfield, with a particular focus on community participation.
- (ii) Traffic calming measures, including features outside schools, with the Council's Roads Dept;
- (iii) Playground scheme with Parks Department, to include the addition of 5 play facilities across Tallaght West by end 2006 and the possibility of 4 additional playgrounds within the first three years of the strategy.

*Continuing to deliver a Common Quality Standard to support outcomes for children:*

South Dublin has already committed in a number of ways to improving the physical fabric of Tallaght West through the delivery of a Common Quality Standard across all housing. Some of their key projects, which have exceeded national targets in some areas, include:

- (i) Installing central heating in all houses;
- (ii) County-wide insulation project;
- (iii) Programmed electrical upgrades;
- (iv) Installation of mains smoke alarms;
- (v) Replacement of windows to provide for double glazing in all homes.