

1. INTRODUCTION

The Blakestown Needs Analysis Group (BNAG) was established in early 2002 to carry out a survey of local residents living within the Blakestown parish area of Blanchardstown in Dublin 15. The BNAG, which involves representatives from a number of statutory agencies, voluntary organisations and community based groups working within the Blakestown area, felt that it was important to conduct a survey which would help to determine the key needs, hopes and concerns of local people. The outcomes from the survey would then serve to influence the priorities and spending decisions of key statutory agencies and voluntary organisations which are working within Blakestown.

In particular, the results of the survey could impact upon the RAPID (Revitalising Areas through Planning, Investment and Development) programme which has been set up in 25 urban locations – Blanchardstown is one of these locations and the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates within Blakestown have been designated as areas to be prioritised within the RAPID programme in Blanchardstown. It is intended that the RAPID programme will deliver additional investment and support and better co-ordinated public services to the designated RAPID areas (including the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates).

The first stage of the needs analysis process in the Blakestown area has involved a survey of households in the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates – these estates were selected first on account of the need to ensure that the views and opinions of local people in these two estates could influence the priorities and focuses of the RAPID programme in the Blanchardstown area. The second stage of the needs analysis survey in the Blakestown area will involve consultations with local residents living in areas like Briarwood, Ashfield, Woodlands and Huntstown Lawn. It is anticipated that the second stage of the needs analysis survey of the Blakestown area should be completed by the end of 2002.

This report on the first stage of the needs analysis survey (focusing upon the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates) will consider the outcomes from this phase of the survey under the following headings: methodology and quantitative outcomes; demographic outcomes; views of the area; housing in the area; environment in the area; services within the area; facilities within the area; youth services and facilities; community activity; health and well-being; childcare and child development; and hopes/fears for the future.

2. METHODOLOGY AND QUANTITATIVE OUTCOMES

The survey of local residents in the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates involved the following actions:

- The employment of a research co-ordinator, Stephen Rourke, to manage and to oversee the process of completing the survey of local residents. Stephen is also responsible for writing the survey reports.
- The production of a questionnaire which focused upon a range of issues which are of interest to local residents, local community based groups and statutory agencies. The questionnaire contained a total of 51 questions.
- The employment of a team of 10 local researchers: Lesley Boland, Dolores Flynn, Marie Flynn, Catherine Mooney, Ann Moran, Ann Osbourne, June Pacelli, Anna Reagan, Bernie Renehan and Marie Smyth. Most of these researchers have lived in the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates for a significant period of time. Each of the local researchers took on responsibility for ensuring that the questionnaires were completed by as many households as possible in the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates.
- Circulation of an Information Note to each household in Sheepmoor and Whitestown. The Information Notes, which were distributed by the local researchers, provided some advance notice about the survey and about the fact that one of the local researchers would be making contact with each household in the near future.
- Completion of the questionnaires by local residents. This involved a combination of residents completing the questionnaire by themselves in their own time/space and other residents completing the questionnaire with the active assistance of one of the local researchers.
- Regular meetings of the research team (the research co-ordinator and the 10 local researchers). These meetings, which took place on a fortnightly basis, provided the members of the research team with opportunities to discuss any difficulties or problems which had emerged during the survey process and to update each other on the progress which was being made by each of the local researchers.
- The research co-ordinator analysed all of the questionnaires which were completed and, on the basis of these analyses, produced this report on the survey of local residents in the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates.

A total of 588 households participated in the survey of local residents in the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates. This figure represents 85.7% of the occupied houses in the two estates – out of a total of 698 houses (475 in Whitestown and 223 in Sheepmoor), 686 houses were occupied at the time of the survey (466 in Whitestown and 220 in Sheepmoor). Of the 466 occupied houses in Whitestown, 394 (84.5%) households participated in the survey; and of the 220 occupied houses in Sheepmoor, 194 (88.2%) participated in the survey.

These quantitative outcomes would indicate that local residents in Sheepmoor and Whitestown have a high level of interest and concern about the future of their own community. The extent to which local people committed time and energy to completing the questionnaire – in many cases, this involved one or two hours work – demonstrates the way in which local people are not apathetic about the future of their own community, but rather are truly committed to improving the quality of life and life prospects for local people living within the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates. The outcomes from the survey process would also suggest that the local researchers displayed a high level of commitment and tenacity in ensuring that as many people as possible in Sheepmoor and Whitestown participated in the survey of local residents.

3. DEMOGRAPHIC OUTCOMES

Question 1

Ages of Children in Household?

Statistical outcomes

Ninety five of the surveyed households in Sheepmoor and Whitestown did not have any children aged 21 and under. Of the remaining 493 surveyed households the following are the ages of children within their households:

Age of children		Sheepmoor	Whitestown	Total
1 year and under	–	7	17	24
2 years	–	10	33	43
3 years	–	17	35	52
4 years	–	15	30	45
5 years	–	10	26	36
6 years	–	13	20	33
7 years	–	18	19	37
8 years	–	12	22	34
9 years	–	14	32	46
10 years	–	16	33	49
11 years	–	10	29	39
12 years	–	22	39	61
13 years	–	14	31	45
14 years	–	17	30	47
15 years	–	9	46	55
16 years	–	18	35	53
17 years	–	20	60	80
18 years	–	20	52	72
19 years	–	15	42	57
20 years	–	11	42	53
21 years	–	<u>13</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>49</u>
		301	709	1,010

Comments/Analysis

It is estimated that 95 (16.2%) of the households in the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates are occupied exclusively by adults over the age of 21. This figure is largely accounted for by a combination of (i) families who have lived in the area for a considerable period of time and whose children have now grown up into adults and (ii) young couples who have not yet begun to have children.

Of the remaining 493 (83.8%) households which do have children aged 21 and under, these households have a total of 1,010 children. If the households who did not participate in the survey are factored into these figures, it is estimated that a total of 1,190 young people aged 21 and under are living in the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates.

In relation to the age profile of children and young people living in the households surveyed in the estates, the following are the age categories for these children and young people:

Age of children	Sheepmoor	Whitestown	Total
Aged 0 – 5	59 (19.6%)	141 (19.9%)	200 (19.8%)
Aged 6 – 10	73 (24.3%)	126 (17.8%)	199 (19.7%)
Aged 11 – 15	72 (23.9%)	175 (24.7%)	247 (24.5%)
Aged 16 – 21	97 (32.2%)	267 (37.6%)	364 (36.0%)
	301 (100.0%)	709 (100.0%)	1,010 (100.0%)

On the basis of these figures, it is apparent that there are a significant number of children/young people within each of the aforementioned categories. It is particularly noticeable that there is a fairly large proportion of teenagers and young adults within the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates – 611 (60.5%) of the 1,010 children and young people are aged between 11 and 21. This outcome would suggest that there is a maturing population within the two estates – many families who moved into the area 20 to 25 years ago now have children who are either in their late teens or in the early stages of adulthood.

The outcomes from this question would demonstrate the need to put in place a range and diversity of programmes and services which will meet the various needs of children and young people between the ages of 0 and 21 eg. family support and childcare services for young children, after school activities and summer projects for older children, youth programmes and services for teenagers, employment and continuing education programmes for young adults.

4. VIEWS OF THE AREA

Question 2

Length of time living the area?

Statistical outcomes

Number of years

living in the area	Sheepmoor	Whitestown	Total
1 – 3	8 (4.1%)	25 (6.3%)	33 (5.6%)
4 – 7	16 (8.2%)	37 (9.4%)	53 (9.0%)
8 – 12	10 (5.2%)	45 (11.4%)	55 (9.4%)
13 – 16	32 (16.5%)	46 (11.7%)	78 (13.3%)
17 – 20	27 (13.9%)	207 (52.5%)	234 (39.8%)
21 – 24	57 (29.4%)	33 (8.4%)	90 (15.3%)
25 – 28	44 (22.7%)	1 (0.3%)	45 (7.6%)
Totals	194 (100%)	394 (100%)	588 (100%)

Comments/Analysis

The outcomes from this question would suggest that the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates are fairly settled communities. Over 60% of the surveyed households have lived in these estates for 17 years or more – in Sheepmoor 66.0% of the households have been in the area for 17 years or more whilst the comparative figure for Whitestown is 61.2%. On the basis of these outcomes it is evident that a significant majority of local people have a close attachment and affinity to the estate in which they live and to the general Blakestown area – they have lived in the area for a lengthy period of time; they have brought up their families/children within the area; they have linked into the local networks of schools, shops, public services, community facilities etc.; and they have made friends and established relationships within the area.

The fact that over 60% of the households have lived in the area for 17 years or more is considered to be a positive outcome – it would suggest that there is a certain degree of satisfaction with the area, that local people are generally quite happy with the quality of live within the area and that there has not been any significant exodus or outward migration of people from the area over the last 25 years period.

Question 3

What do you think of the area?

Statistical outcomes

Views of the area	Sheepmoor	Whitestown	Totals
Good	16 (8.2%)	76 (19.3%)	92 (15.6%)
Alright	91 (46.9%)	208 (52.8%)	299 (50.9%)
Poor	72 (37.1%)	98 (24.9%)	170 (28.9%)
Very Poor	15 (7.8%)	12 (3.0%)	27 (4.6%)
	194 (100%)	394 (100%)	588 (100%)

Direct Quotes:

'I love the area'

'Needs a lot more police'

'Could be a lot better'

'Just about OK'

'Very very dirty'

'I think it's a good area. Most people are interested in making it a nicer place to live'

'I don't have any major problems'

'We really like the area'

'Not a bad area but could do with a lot of cleaning up'

'Very dirty and neglected'

'Neglected and run-down'

'Nice people, i.e. the neighbours'

'I hate it here'

'Not much these days – it was once a nice place to live'

'Nice when I moved in – now its gone to hell'

'Mainly OK except for a few gangs hanging about and a few robbed cars'

'It could really be a nice place to live'

'Its in bits'

'OK – summertime is a bit rough but winter is OK'

'Most people are great but there is a small bad minority'

'Neighbours are mostly very good but there are a good few bullies in the area and they frighten people'

'I like living here but fear for my kids'

'Lovely area but gone downhill a lot in last 20 years'

'Becoming more dangerous to walk the streets'
'Far too many houses too close together'
'Hate to see boarded-up houses all the time'
'It's a very dangerous area'
'Put up with it because I have to'
'Has potential to be a lot better'
'Better than living in high rise flats'
'A nice friendly sociable area'
'Has improved over the last 6 years but was very bad with gangs and joy-riders'
'Going downhill rapidly'
'Filthy dirty'
'Quiet once you keep to yourself'
'Only because its near to the shopping centre'
'Too much traffic and too fast – more control needed'
'A large and young community'
'It needs a lot of hard work and investment in education'
'It's a dump – too many gangs hanging around and nothing for the younger kids'
'We need to upgrade the area a lot'
'I like it but I wish the kids didn't make it look like Dunsink dump half the time'
'Its getting better each year'
'Grand during the week – terrible noisy at the week-end'
'Same as any run down council housing estate that has been built in the 40s. But now its even more ugly and Fingal County Council couldn't give two shits'
'Best area in northside of Dublin'
'Its OK to live in apart from the litter and rubbish that is dropped'
'Run down, neglected and abused'
'I think Fingal County Council and some of the residents could make the place a lot better by cutting the grass outside their houses'
'Its not great but I could think of other places a lot worse to live in'
'It has calmed down a lot'
'A bleeding eye-sore'
'Has good potential but at present is a very uncaring neighbourhood'
'I'd love to move out of here'
'An awful lot of improvements needed'
'Not the cleanest of places to be living'

'Not as bad as its made out to be'

'It has got prospects'

'I love the area and want my kids to do the same. But we must take a stand. We should be allowed to vet who comes into the area and then vet them again after two years, so young girls who get the houses don't move in their boyfriends'

'Most people here are lovely but a few bad families bring it down. They should be dealt with accordingly'

'It is getting worse and worse – I would be gone out of here if I had the money'

'There's a high rate of deprivation, alcoholism and drug use in Blakestown – all symptoms of the fact that our society isn't healthy and there's nothing for the kids to do'

'I love Blanchardstown and made a decision to stay and renovate my house some years ago but I hope I haven't made a mistake. The estate management team seem to be going in the right way to tidy the area up but this is no good if a small minority are allowed to continue to abuse the area'

'In general the area is a good place to live, but drug abuse and joyriding are the two main problems'

'It wouldn't be such a bad place if it wasn't for the scumbag in the area'

'This place will never change. It's a kip and will always be a kip'

'Living on the corner is a nightmare. I must fill at least one black sack with bottles and cans that are thrown over the wall not to mention the gangs sitting there, playing loud music. If I go out and ask them to move I get abuse hurled at me'

'It's a nice area and the people are nice so let the majority rule and not the wrong minorities'

'I really like the area but parents need to control their kids and stop them annoying normal people like me'

'The area has gone down very badly in the last three years. On numerous occasions we have cleaned up our garden only to get up the next day to find broken bottles in the garden and eggs smashed on the house – this is not very encouraging to keep the place clean and tidy'

'I think in general that its not a bad place to live. And fair play to the people who organised the survey. Its about time something was done about this area'

'This could be a really great place to live but people have to get it together and stop passing the buck'

Comments/Analysis

There are a large variety and diversity of views about what it is like to live in the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates. Whilst 66.5% of local residents feel that it is a good or alright area in which to live, 33.5% of residents feel that it is a poor or very poor area in which to live. On the basis of the responses to the questionnaires it is also evident that there are differing opinion between local residents who live in Sheepmoor and those who live in Whitestown – whilst only 55.1% of residents in Sheepmoor considered it a good or alright area, this figure rises to 72.1% for residents within Whitestown.

The responses to the survey would also suggest that many residents are worried and concerned about the ways in which they have seen the area decline and worsen over the last number of years. There are numerous references in the questionnaires to the area *'having gone downhill'* or *'not being as good and safe as it was 10-15 years ago'*. There is a fairly widespread view that the area has disimproved over the years and that problems relating to drugs, drink, antisocial behaviour and the general tidiness and upkeep of the area are now a lot worse than they were when local residents first moved into their houses.

Question 4

What are the best things about living in the area?

Statistical outcomes

A total of 44 respondents to the questionnaire (i.e. 7.5%) stated that there is nothing good or positive about living in the area. The remaining 544 respondents cited the following positive aspects about living in the area:

Close to Blanchardstown Shopping Centre	–	224 (34.3% of responses)
Good neighbours and friends	–	188 (28.7% of responses)
Handy for everywhere (eg. schools, work)	–	75 (11.5% of responses)
Nice/good home	–	42 (6.4% of responses)
Close to family	–	30 (4.6% of responses)
Community spirit	–	25 (3.8% of responses)
Close to hospital	–	22 (3.4% of responses)
Hill in front of house	–	12 (1.8% of responses)
Open spaces	–	12 (1.8% of responses)
Others		24 (3.7% of responses)
		654

Direct Quotes:

'Good neighbours, near to all my necessities eg. work, school, shopping'

'You get to know a lot of people'

'Neighbours are lovely'

'Driving out in the mornings'

'The new library, open park and pool'

'Easy access to everywhere and our parents also live locally'

'Residents pulling together in times of need'

'It was a much better place to live years ago – there was real community spirit then'

'Natives are friendly, good hearted and good humoured'

'Since Blanchardstown Shopping Centre opened there's been work for the residents of Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates'

'Good local infrastructure'

'Not much trouble'

'Very central and everything is on the doorstep'

'The Shopping Centre and the jobs it created and living near family and friends'

'Lots of amenities'

'We're not overlooked'

'Nothing, we're always tormented with eggs being thrown and broken windows'

'The town centre is great and 99% of the people are very nice'

'It's in a cul-de-sac'

'Well laid out and solid'

'The new traffic lights from Blakestown'

Comments/Analysis

On the basis of the responses from the questionnaires it is evident that proximity to Blanchardstown Shopping Centre and good neighbours/friends are very important and positive features about living in the Blakestown area – these two features account for 63% of the responses to the question 'what are the best things about living in the area?' In relation to the Blanchardstown Shopping Centre it is evident that the development of this centre has significantly enhanced employment, shopping and socialisation opportunities for local people and has made a major contribution to the local infrastructure within the Blanchardstown area – attached to the Shopping Centre are a whole range of civic and community facilities (eg. new civic offices, new library). In relation to the prioritising of neighbours and friends, it is encouraging that so many local people identified this issue as

being amongst the best things about living in the Blakestown area – this could suggest that fairly strong bonds and friendships have developed between local residents living in the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates.

Question 5

What are the worst things about living in the area?

Statistical outcomes

Statistical outcomes		Numbers
Robbed cars/joyriding	–	176 (23.8% of responses)
State of environment	–	121 (16.4% of responses)
Gangs of young people	–	119 (16.1% of responses)
Drugs	–	96 (13.0% of responses)
Drinking (especially by young people)	–	63 (8.5% of responses)
Lack of facilities for children and young people	–	45 (6.1% of responses)
Speeding cars / traffic congestion	–	41 (5.5% of responses)
Vandalism	–	40 (5.4% of responses)
Others	–	38 (5.2% of responses)
		739

Direct Quotes:

‘It’s a building site at present’

‘I have a disabled child and I’m afraid to let him out because of the bullying’

‘Gangs of youths hanging about and making life difficult for residents’

‘High poverty and disadvantage and ghettoised’

‘Gangs, open spaces and nowhere for the kids to play’

‘Nothing for the teenagers to do’

‘All the trouble and the dirt’

‘Unsupervised kids from 8.30 p.m. to 11.00 p.m.’

‘Noisy, with young demons speeding around’

‘Lots and lots of harassment’

‘Kids and thugs on drugs’

‘Cheeky kids climbing on your back wall’

‘Vandalism, kids hanging about late at night because there is nothing for them to do’

‘The length of time that some houses are left unoccupied’

‘Its getting out of hand with gangs drinking and broken bottles outside people’s homes’

'The teenagers defacing property'
'Yet more houses being built'
'More buildings going up, the area is built up enough as it is'
'Kids sitting on walls drinking'
'Cars travelling at high speed'
'Anti-social behaviour, litter and lack of medical attention'
'The bloody junkies'
'Nothing for anyone to do'
'Nowhere for kids to play and outside the house is very dangerous'
'Watching youths drinking and drug-taking and smashing all the beer bottles where kids can get injured'
'The speed and amount of traffic that there is'
'Trying to get to sleep on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights'
'Living in it'
'They no longer cut the patches of grass on the pavement outside of each house'
'Big trucks and container lorries parked on the estate roads'
'Local shop an eyesore when you drive into the estate'
'Whitestown is littered with broken glass. The cul-de-sac (Whitestown Avenue) in which I live has an open space which cannot be built on. It is an eyesore. Gangs of teenagers drinking and lighting fires on open spaces'
'Embarrassment when friends and family come to visit because its so dirty'
'Dangerous place to bring up kids'

Comments/Analysis

The responses to this question clearly demonstrate that the worst things about living in the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates (in the opinion of local residents) relate to issues concerning drink/drugs, anti-social and criminal behaviour. Robbed cars/joyriding, gangs of young people, drugs, excessive drinking, vandalism and other types of anti-social behaviour account for 512 responses (69.3%) to the question concerning 'what are the worst things about living in the area?' From the perspective of local people, it is evident that the most important and urgent priority is to develop strategies and programmes which will aim to reduce the levels of drinking, drug taking, joyriding and anti-social behaviour which are currently taking place within the two estates.

The other key issues of concern to local residents relate to the state of the environment and the lack of facilities for children and young people within the

Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates – 166 households who participated in the survey felt that these gaps in provision and services were amongst the worst aspects of living within the Blakestown area.

Question 6

Would you like to remain living within the area?

Statistical outcomes

To remain living

within the area	Sheepmoor	Whitestown	Totals
Yes	113 (58.2%)	246 (62.4%)	359 (61.1%)
No	48 (29.9%)	110 (27.9%)	168 (28.6%)
Maybe	23 (11.9%)	38 (9.7%)	61 (10.3%)
	194 (100%)	394 (100%)	588 (100%)

Direct Quotes:

'No choice, but with a few improvements, yes, I would like to stay'

'Yes, no intentions of leaving here'

'No I really want to get out of here'

'Yes if conditions improved and there were things for the kids'

'Only way we can move out will be to win the Lotto'

'Love to move if we had the money'

'Yes I grew up in the area. But there are a lot of problems in Sheepmoor and I'd move if I could'

'I'd move tomorrow if I could'

'What other option do we have'

'Yes, if there was a way of buying my house'

'Yes – its too late in life to be moving now'

'Yes I would if I thought it would change'

'If I had a choice I'd be gone like a flash'

'Yes because my family live here'

'Not in this house – there is no community spirit, nobody cares'

Comments/Analysis

A relatively high proportion of local residents have expressed a clear desire to remain living within the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates – over 60% of the residents would like to remain within the area whilst a further 10% of residents said that they would stay within the area if improvements could be made in relation to issues concerning the perceived upsurge in anti-social behaviour and the poor/unkept state of the environment within the area. The responses to this question would also suggest that many local people have become more despondent and disillusioned about living in the area within the last number of years; and that the proportion of people who expressed a desire to remain living within the area would have been much higher 5-10 years ago.

Question 7

What are the things that your area needs most?

Statistical Outcomes

Things that area

need most	Numbers
Playgrounds/play areas for children	– 195 (27.3% of responses)
Activities for young people	– 82 (11.5% of responses)
Traffic calming/speed ramps	– 75 (10.5% of responses)
More effective policing	– 66 (9.3% of responses)
Better maintenance of houses	– 60 (8.4% of responses)
Regular clean up of area	– 50 (7.0% of responses)
More parental responsibility for children	– 40 (5.6% of responses)
More community spirit	– 21 (2.9% of responses)
More skips in the area	– 18 (2.5% of responses)
Better street lighting	– 17 (2.4% of responses)
Clubs/activities for senior citizens	– 16 (2.2% of responses)
Better bus service	– 14 (2.0% of responses)
More sports facilities	– 12 (1.7% of responses)
Others	– 47 (6.7% of responses)

713

Direct Quotes:

- 'Cul-de-sacs to stop cars speeding'*
- 'More clubs for the youth to keep them off the streets'*
- 'Community policing and a lot more activities for youth'*
- 'A good Neighbourhood Watch and a lot more police'*
- 'Lights in the back lanes working and checked regularly'*
- 'Parents have to take responsibility for their kids actions and control them better'*
- 'Less boarded up houses, they make the place look awful'*
- 'Bring back the skips like before but only on a more regular basis'*
- 'Screening of family residents, old and new'*
- 'The Community Garda to play a greater role and to get to know the kids in their area'*
- 'A lot more community spirit'*
- 'Traffic lights at entrance to Sheepmoor/Whitestown junction'*
- 'More community spirit to deal with anti-social behaviour'*
- 'Have cradle to grave facilities'*
- 'Gas central heating in all houses'*
- 'It would be nice to see a politician who cares once in a while'*
- 'Children taught to behave properly'*
- 'Greater parental control from a small minority of local residents whose kids are roaming the streets at night'*
- 'Proper street cleaning by Fingal County Council'*
- 'Traffic lights at beginning of Whitestown Avenue'*
- 'Nothing could improve the area at this stage'*
- 'More Garda patrols when they are really needed eg. between 11 p.m. and 2 a.m. when the teenagers are out going mad'*
- 'Gardaí walking in the day and driving at night'*
- 'Zero Tolerance'*
- 'Speed ramps and prosecution of people who speed through estate'*
- 'Night sweeper to go around more often because some residents have to come out to clean up'*
- 'A far better community spirit'*
- 'A designated play area for kids. The hard surface play area is not suitable and is too far away'*
- 'We need permanent skips and a litter warden'*
- 'A 1000 lb. bomb'*

'More local input. Fingal County Council implementing results of Analysis Group feedback'

'Joyriders are making my life a misery'

'A response from the Gardaí when they are notified of under-age drinking in public'

'Things for the troublesome youths to do'

'More law enforcement and police patrols'

'Fingal County Council skips regularly, so there won't be a build up of rubbish, garbage and broken glass'

'Fingal County Council to take complaints about bad tenants causing hassle to other people seriously'

'Local pub and shops that open until at least 10 p.m.'

'Some form of traffic calming measures to slow down the few who like to dry skid their cars around'

'Cops, cops and more cops'

'Better public transport'

'I don't think the residents deserve anything considering the damage already done to recent improvements'

Comments/Analysis

In their responses to the questionnaire local residents have named a whole range of different actions which are required to improve living conditions and the quality of life within the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates. On the basis of these responses, it is evident that the provision of services and facilities for children and young people is a high priority for local people – 277 responses to the question 'what are the things that the area needs most?' relate to playgrounds, play areas and activities for young people.

In analysing the questionnaires completed by households in the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates it is evident that local people have made a direct connection between the availability of these types of services/facilities and involvement of young people in anti-social activities – if there were more constructive activities and programmes for children and young people, it would lessen the likelihood of young people being tempted into more destructive and anti-social behaviour. Other key issues identified by local people in relation to improvements which need to take place within the Blakestown area relate to better traffic calming measures (eg. speed ramps) and a more effective policing/Garda presence within the area.

5. HOUSING IN THE AREA

Question 8

What do you think of the layout of your area?

Statistical outcomes

Layout of area	Sheepmore	Whitestown	Total
Very good	4 (2.1%)	31 (7.9%)	35 (6.0%)
Good	34 (17.5%)	114 (28.9%)	148 (25.2%)
Alright	92 (47.4%)	164 (41.6%)	256 (43.5%)
Poor	42 (21.6%)	69 (17.5%)	111 (18.9%)
Very Poor	22 (11.4%)	16 (4.1%)	38 (6.4%)
	194 (100%)	394 (100%)	588 (100%)

Direct Quotes:

'Open spaces and a lot of wasted ground'

'Open spaces are being used for drugs and drink'

'Not very nice – graffiti on the walls'

'Very congested with traffic'

'Very badly set out'

'Its OK but maybe fill in the gaps so stolen cars won't get through'

'It would be nice to have a few trees in the greenery'

'It's spread out better than most areas'

'Bad for parking if you have visitors'

'Nice to start with but now too much building going on and very bad traffic'

'Not enough green belts'

'The Blakestown Road was never intended for high volume traffic and I'm afraid a child will have an accident'

'No thought by planners whatsoever and far too many houses'

'Just too crowded'

'Surrounding walls makes it look like a ghetto'

'Very cramped'

'Could do with a lot of work on it'

'Very spacious layout'

'I live in a corner house and it's a danger to the kids'

'Too many houses clustered together'

'Could be a lot more private'

'Cul-de-sac a bad idea as it attracts kids in for the wrong reasons'
'Good but it's a shame that we had to lose the green belt to houses'
'The long avenue through the estate is silly and there is too much traffic on it and this will only get worse with the new houses'
'Alright but we need some local shops'
'Cars going too fast and we need more road signs for the kids'
'Dreadful walls and huge E.S.B. pylons running down the middle'
'Not too bad but pylons an eye-sore'
'Boring!!'
'At the moment the area is fairly cramped with houses being built on all green areas'
'Very bad – the ramps don't stop the joy-riding at all'
'Bad – never informed as to what's going on'
'Too many boarded up houses and houses not well kept'
'A bit of landscaping would be nice'
'Disgraceful – the whole area needs revamping'
'Don't like big stones in front of the houses'
'Corners are a nuisance with gangs hanging about and peeing in them – morning, noon and night'

Comments/Analysis

Most local residents living in the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates feel that the layout of the area is satisfactory – 74.7% of the households who participated in the survey considered that the layout/design of the area is either very good, good or alright whilst 25.3% of households considered the layout/design to be either poor or very poor. In relation to particular concerns which local residents have about the layout of the estates, it is apparent that there is a desire amongst many residents (i) to introduce measures to reduce the levels of car speeding within the area and (ii) to develop strategies which will discourage or prevent groups/gangs of young people congregating within the area in an intimidating manner eg. cutting off or policing cul-de-sacs, lanes and other places where young people partake in drugs or excessive alcohol consumption.

Question 9

What are the best features of the houses?

Statistical outcomes

Fifty four respondents to the questionnaire (9.2%) did not identify any good features of the houses in the area. The remaining 534 identified the following as being the best features of the houses:

Good sized houses and rooms	–	222
Front and back gardens	–	121
Solid, sturdy, well built	–	95
Large kitchens	–	80
Improvements I have made myself	–	38
Others	–	40

Direct Quotes:

'Now that Fingal County Council has decided to put in heating, it makes life a lot easier'

'Plenty of room for home improvements'

'Houses having a driveway to keep cars off the road especially those roads where the robbed cars are accessible to'

'They are the best houses that Fingal County Council have built. Very spacious with big gardens'

'They all look the same and are nice and compact'

'Good size kitchen and front room and big garden also'

'They're not too close together'

'Not much – when you do it yourself its nice'

'I like the red-brick features'

'Large room and quiet cul-de-sac'

'Structurally they're very sound'

'Well laid out and built to last'

'Back gardens because we are not overlooked'

'Houses that are well kept by the occupants in the area'

'No houses behind us'

'Lots of room to move about in'

Comments/Analysis

Responses to this question would suggest that many residents living in the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates are very satisfied with the houses in which they live. They are particularly satisfied about the sizes of the rooms within their houses, about the gardens which adjoin their houses and about the sturdy/solid nature of their houses. Whilst many residents might have problems and difficulties about the anti-social activities and the state of the environment within their own areas, it is also evident that the majority of local people are fairly satisfied about the houses in which they live.

Question 10

What are the worst features of the houses?

Statistical outcomes

A reasonably large number of households who completed the questionnaire – 168 (28.6%) – stated that there are no bad/poor features within the houses in the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates. Of the remaining 420 households, the following were identified as the worst features of the houses in these estates:

Houses too close together	–	92
No central heating	–	54
Rotten/wooden windows	–	48
Back lanes/ Alleyways	–	42
Badly made front doors	–	40
Small bathrooms	–	40
Boarded up houses	–	38
Not properly maintained by		
Fingal County Council	–	25
Small front gardens	–	22
No double glazing	–	20
Houses are too small	–	15
Others	–	39

Direct Quotes:

‘Back lanes just used as dumping grounds that then attracts gangs’

‘Walls are like cardboard’

‘Electric meter is old and very dangerous’

‘No heating and the woodwork is rotten’

'Back lanes are always full of junk and rubbish'

'There're all like boxes'

'I think the houses on the opposite side are too close. I think they can see into my living room'

'Side gardens that are too big. Fingal County Council should buy the gardens back and build more houses on them'

'Houses are terraced so bins must be brought through the houses'

'Dirt and muck from building sites'

'My roof is leaking since I moved in and the Fingal County Council has done nothing about it'

'No central heating at all'

'Shoddy fences in the back gardens'

'The dismal brown pebble dashing contrasting with the new houses'

'Every house should have side entrance access'

'No straight walls or floors – just like Afghanistan'

'Side entrance is too far back and is used as a toilet at the weekend'

'Fire places are in wrong place. Can't knock wall down to kitchen'

'Too big for older couples'

'The small sitting room and box-room – too small by far'

'Living beside pylons and E.S.B. Green Boxes'

'As it's a corner house, the kids are never off our walls'

Comments/Analysis

It is encouraging that a reasonably high proportion of residents in the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates could not identify any negative feature about the houses in which they live – over one quarter of local residents stated that there was nothing wrong with the houses in which they lived whilst a number of other residents named issues which did not directly relate to the condition of their own house (eg. houses being too close together, back lanes/alleyways, boarded up houses). These types of outcomes would suggest that whilst some improvements still need to take place in relation to issues like the installation of central heating and the upgrading of windows/doors, local residents are generally quite satisfied with the quality of the houses in which they live.

Question 11

What do you think could be done to improve the houses within your area?

Statistical outcomes

A total of 168 households who completed the questionnaires (i.e. 28.6%) felt that the houses in the Sheepmoor/Whitestown estates were fine/alright and could not name any particular ways in which the housing stock could be improved. In relation to the other 420 households, the following represent their responses to the question concerning ways in which the houses might be improved within the area:

Better maintenance services		
by Fingal County Council	–	136
Weatherglaze/Double-glazed windows	–	66
Install central heating	–	57
Sort out boarded up houses	–	47
New/higher walls on houses	–	44
Railings on houses	–	42
Close back lanes	–	38
Better lighting	–	30
Walls for front/back gardens	–	23
Others	–	56

Direct Quotes:

'Fingal County Council could do a lot more in terms of maintenance for their tenants, eg. heating etc.'

'They all look good at the moment as they were painted recently. It should be done more often'

'Fix up gates and paint the houses'

'Give Fingal County Council more power to do something about the anti-social behaviour'

'End of terrace houses should be fitted with railings'

'Well, Fingal County Council have started putting railings on all corner houses. I think that they should have put them on all houses. That would be an improvement'

'No more houses in the area'

'Build nice walls between all the houses'

'People that don't clean their properties should have something done about them'

'A scheme to help people improve their homes whether they're buying or renting'

'Some of it is being done at the moment, i.e. the railings around corner houses which should help prevent gangs hanging around'

'Treat us as well as you treat the asylum seekers'

'To renovate the sitting room by extending the sitting room window – similar to the Corduff houses'

'Remove pylons'

'More maintenance from Fingal County Council'

'New railings to be extended to all houses'

'I would like central heating in houses which cannot afford it themselves'

'Upgrading like Corduff'

'People that are neglecting their houses should be thrown out of them'

'Extend the front of the houses'

'Security fencing over the side entrances'

Comments/Analysis

In relation to improving the housing stock within the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates, local residents have clearly identified the need for Fingal County Council to provide a better maintenance and upgrading service. In more particular terms, the outcomes from the questionnaire would suggest that Fingal County Council should improve their ongoing maintenance service and also ensure that all houses in local authority ownership have central heating and well fitted doors and windows. Apart from these internal dimensions of local houses, most of the recommendations relating to improvements in the housing situation in Sheepmoor and Whitestown relate to external issues eg. placing new tenants in boarded up houses, closing off back lanes and alleyways.

6. ENVIRONMENT IN THE AREA

Question 12

What do you think of the physical environment in your area?

Statistical outcomes

Physical environment

in area	Sheepmoor	Whitestown	Totals
Very good	0 (0%)	3 (0.18%)	3 (0.5%)
Good	5 (2.6%)	22 (5.6%)	27 (4.6%)
Alright	80 (41.2%)	188 (47.7%)	268 (45.6%)
Poor	66 (34.0%)	126 (32.2%)	192 (32.6%)
Very Poor	43 (22.2%)	55 (13.7%)	98 (16.7%)
	194 (100%)	394 (100%)	588 (100%)

Direct Quotes:

'Open spaces full of broken glass'

'Not good – Fingal County Council need to do a lot of work to clean up Sheepmoor'

'No litter bins and open spaces littered with broken glass'

'People try their best but can't be expected to clean up heavy dirt'

'I can only speak for my road which is kept fairly clean as most people look after their houses'

'Only one open space left'

'Not enough open spaces – they keep building on them'

'Desperate – rubbish is dumped everywhere'

'Too many of our football pitches have been taken away and adults and kids miss them'

'In Sheepmoor we miss the Fingal County Council skips coming to prevent build-up of rubbish, especially in the back lanes'

'Very bad – looks like Beirut sometimes'

'I see lots of people not caring and throwing household rubbish in open spaces'

'The place is just filthy'

'We really need some decent play areas for the kids'

'Need 'children at play' signs at strategic points throughout the estate'

'Open spaces are just not safe for kids with broken glass on the fields and day-time joyriders'

'It's a real dump'

'It's so dirty – the kids can't even go out to play'

'No rubbish collection (left to residents) around shrubbery and planted areas'

'Any green areas are used as dumping sites'

'Poor grassland maintenance'

'The open spaces are starting to disappear but at least the play areas are improving'

'Not enough open spaces and everywhere is so untidy'

'Very bad. We should have a park and a play-ground for youngsters'

'Since Londis closed it has been better. But this may be short lived. The area always looks tired even after the houses were painted'

'There is no play area but the women on my road do as much as they can'

'Area needs a good clean up. The roads are in a bad way – ever since that building took place'

'Millennium Park not finished'

'No play area. I'm sick of my child picking up cans and rubbish'

'The graffiti is horrible and hasn't been touched in two years'

'The place is like a Tip Head on Monday morning. We need a permanent skip to put all the rubbish in'

'All open spaces are reached by crossing a main road which is inaccessible to kids without supervision'

'Sad to say the estate is filthy. Most people who have moved in said no matter what you do to your house it is still in a filthy estate'

'People just don't care about the area anymore. It's the same few people that tidy the area all the time and that's not fair'

'Don't like walking at side of Whitestown Park – its littered with glass and people who do this should be fined'

'We need Fingal County Council to provide skips so rubbish does not get dumped in open spaces or over the walls'

'Not enough open space on our cul-de-sacs to play and many windows are broken with footballs'

'Very poor – open areas should be landscaped for old and youth to use'

'There is a lot of green areas but there are no play areas for the young kids'

'In the past year Whitestown Park has had a lot of work done to it. Lets keep it up to standard and congratulations to Fingal County Council'

'I notice this place is gradually getting a make-over. I just hope it makes a difference but its looking well so far'

Comments/Analysis

There is a fairly high level of dissatisfaction with the state of the environment and open spaces within the Blakestown area – only 30 (5.1%) of the respondents to the questionnaire felt that the physical environment was either in a very good or good state whilst 290 (49.3%) of respondents felt that the physical environment was either poor or very poor. These outcomes would suggest that there is a clear need to improve the local environment in Blakestown and to make the area a tidier, cleaner and more presentable place to live. Respondents to the questionnaire made recurring references to the need for the area to be cleaned up on a more regular basis; for local residents to be more careful with their litter/rubbish; for the green spaces within the area to be protected and maintained (there is a real concern/worry that large tracts of land and green spaces which could be used for community purposes are now built upon by developers); and for playgrounds and play facilities for children and young people to be set up in the remaining green spaces which still exist within the Blakestown area.

Question 13

How might the environment be improved?

Statistical outcomes:

Areas for improvement		Numbers
Play areas and playgrounds	–	125
Better and more regular clean up services by Fingal County Council	–	96
Provision of litter bins and skips	–	89
Speed ramps	–	68
More community involvement in maintaining the environment	–	36
Laneways to be cleaned	–	32
Landscaping of area (planting of trees, shrubs etc.)	–	31
Increased gardaí presence	–	31
More green areas	–	28
House people in boarded up houses	–	23
Better maintenance of houses	–	21
Better street lighting	–	21
Get rid of litter and broken glass	–	19

Put up signs stating 'kids at play'	–	19
Construction of a Youth Centre	–	18
Facilities for Senior Citizens	–	13
Grass verges cut	–	12
Railings around houses	–	11
Others	–	41
		764

Direct Quotes:

- 'Grass cut more often, and roads and lanes cleaned more often'*
- 'Build a play-ground on the open space at the end of Sheepmoor Gardens'*
- 'Road sweeper after bin collection instead of before'*
- 'Loads of skips on the roads for rubbish'*
- 'Fingal County Council to pay more attention to the estates'*
- 'Curfew for people who are out on the roads half the night'*
- 'Painting of walls to clean graffiti'*
- 'More police to stop joyriding, mugging, drug dealing and killing'*
- 'A decent Tenants Association as well as Neighbourhood Watch'*
- 'Just stop the joy riders speeding on our streets'*
- 'Need to make the area a safer place to live in'*
- 'Not good – while open space is needed, this can also cause anti-social behaviour'*
- 'Organise events which will bring the people together'*
- 'Landscaping to be upgraded on a regular basis by Fingal County Council'*
- 'Fingal County Council should keep the grass cut, clean up the rubbish and take the boards off all the boarded up houses'*
- 'Need greater involvement of the youth'*
- 'Fix all the broken paths and lights'*
- 'Strict penalties for dumping'*
- 'Grass verges cut'*
- 'A police presence on Friday and Saturday nights when needed instead of Sunday mornings when they know they won't find any problems'*
- 'I think Fingal County Council should be stricter with the tenants and make them keep the roads and cul-de-sacs tidier'*
- 'Stop cars speeding into the estate and maybe a few ramps'*
- 'Every house with large garden to get railings'*

'Find a way to encourage locals to respect the area'

'Everything needs to be improved'

'Gangs hanging around shouldn't be allowed. I know kids have to play but when they're playing football outside your house all day, it gets annoying hearing that ball bouncing morning, noon and night'

'Railings will be a good idea and there are a lot of walls that could do with a face-lift'

'Less broken glass on street corners'

'Put the drug dealers and death drivers out'

'Local lads could be employed to keep the graffiti off the walls'

'Fingal County Council doing a very good job at the moment. Hope they keep up the good work'

'For Fingal County Council and police to put a stop to anti-social behaviour and prosecute if necessary. In cases where kids are too young to prosecute their parents should be held accountable'

'Fines and regular checks by police to stop drinking and vandalism in this area'

'Regular rubbish collection of unwanted household waste, old bikes, beds etc.'

'If they put tar instead of grass outside the houses that have verges'

'There is no social club or pub. The nearest local is the Shanty and people are afraid to walk under the bridge for fear of being attacked – especially the older people'

'Involve tenants and their kids in tree planting outside their houses'

'A stronger estate management team'

'Parents to know where their kids are at night and get them to put what they throw on the roads into their own bins'

'Employment of local people in landscaping and upkeep of area'

'Litter bins in and around the estate and post boxes would be a help'

'Hash smoking and can drinking stopped on the field and in the corner'

'Clubs for youths who have nothing else to do but drink and take drugs'

'Less bonfires at Halloween to preserve the grass areas'

'We need more pedestrian walk-ways'

'What about the provision of re-cycling bins and a bottle bank'

Comments/Analysis

Local residents made a whole range of useful and interesting suggestions and recommendations in relation to ways in which the environment might be improved in the Blakestown area. Responses to this question would also suggest that concerns about anti-

social behaviour and the impact which this behaviour is having upon the environment and quality of life for residents is a major issue for the population of the Sheepmoor and Whitestown area. In relation to specific recommendations about ways in which the environment might be improved it is evident that four particular recommendations account for 398 (52.1%) of the responses to this question – provision of play areas and playgrounds; better and more regular clean up services by Fingal County Council; provision of litter bins and skips; and installation of speed ramps. It is evident that these four recommendations should be key priorities for the local authority and for other relevant bodies who have some level of responsibility for, and interest in, the improvement of the environment in the Blakestown area.

7. SERVICES WITHIN THE AREA

Question 14

What is your view of the services being provided by local voluntary and community groups?

Statistical outcomes

Services provided by local voluntary and community groups

Very Good	18 (13.8%)
Good	121 (20.6%)
Alright	149 (25.3%)
Poor	74 (12.6%)
Very Poor	51 (8.7%)
No comment/Don't know	112 (19.0%)
	588 (100%)

Direct Quotes:

'Adequate but they lack funds'

'They could clean up the old playground at Sheepmoor and keep the grass verges cut'

'Alright but it would be great if young people could join and start a course'

'Good but not enough volunteers to help'

'Good but too much funding goes on overheads and not what the funding was meant for'

'As good as they can be given the lack of money'

'Doing a good job keeping the focus on disadvantage'

'Could promote themselves more by having seminars to show what they're about'

'I'm not aware of any'

'We never hear from them'

'Not very many'

'Don't even know who they are'

'A lot of good work being done but need to make more people aware of it'

'Doing the best with limited funds'

'They need more people to get involved as they're not equipped to deal with the demand'

'Not properly informed about such groups'

'Need a lot more of them'

'No information about them, maybe through lack of publicity'

'Local groups don't let people know what's going on'

'Coolmine Community Drugs Project is a brilliant group'

'The new information guide will be of great value. Most people are unaware of what is going on in the area'

Comments/Analysis

Whilst there is a fairly high satisfaction rating for local voluntary and community groups within the Blanchardstown area, it is also evident that there is a significant information gap/deficit in relation to the work and activities of these groups. In addition to the 112 households (19.0%) who did not feel that they were in a position to express any particular views about the work of these groups, a significant number of other respondents felt that there was a high level of ignorance about the work of local groups and that these groups need to do much more to publicise the activities in which they are involved. There was also a fairly strong view that more publicity (through newsletters, open days, articles in local newspapers etc.) would encourage more residents to volunteer their services to local groups and organisations.

Question 15

What is your view of the services being provided by Fingal County Council?

Statistical outcomes

Services provided by Fingal County Council	
Very Good	28 (4.8%)
Good	99 (16.8%)
Alright	242 (41.2%)
Poor	120 (20.4%)
Very Poor	98 (16.7%)
No comment/Don't know	1 (0.1%)
	588 (100%)

Direct Quotes:

'Getting their act together'

'Minimal. Very poor in fact'

'They don't do anything with the houses'

'Totally invisible'

'Not enough involvement when communities need it'

'They did provide the area with skips to clear out the rubbish'

'Should have an office in the area so comments and suggestions can be made'

'Very laid back when it comes to repairs on houses'

'OK but the housing list is very long'

'Could do a lot more – they get paid enough'

'Bins are a nightmare between service and charges'

'Maintenance has been pared back over the years'

'Very poor in dealing with tenants complaints. I waited 8 days before they saw to the overflowing sewer in my back garden'

'Slow at improving area and renting back out boarded-up houses'

'Alright but just bring back the skip service'

'Should use the money given by the European Community to improve housing. Bring everything up to date'

'Don't do enough maintenance to the houses, when needed'

'Deplorable'

'Disgraceful – they do fuck all for the kids'

'Should reduce price of bin bags to half and maybe then people would pay'

'They don't collect wheeliebins for 3 days – its disgraceful'

'They seem to have started to take an interest but then again they want to sell the new houses'

'Went down to their Blanchardstown office only to find it has gone. No word on where they moved to either!'

'Very helpful staff but maintenance is a bit slow at times'

'Pure rubbish'

'Could be much improved. The area could be better kept, verges cut and roads kept cleaner'

'Improving, some dedicated people but then some points of contact come across as arrogant, rude and unhelpful'

'Good but could do more to remove household rubbish'

'Starting to pick up on things but could do a lot better'

'Still treat local authority tenants as inferior'

'Not bad but could be vastly improved'

'Could be a lot better but at least they're doing more lately'

'Houses would have to be falling down before they'd come out to you'

'Very good improvement with cleaning of roads and painting of houses'

'Do a fair job but they need the help of the local community'

'If Sheepmoor had a litter warden it might stop people throwing rubbish around the area'

'Fingal County Council should be able to evict bad families that peddle drugs and that have kids that terrorise the old people'

Comments/Analysis

There is a fairly high satisfaction rating with the services provide by Fingal County Council – 62.8% of local households in the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates feel that the Council is providing a very good, good or alright service. The feedback from a number of questionnaires would also indicate that the services provided by Fingal County Council have improved in recent times and that these improvements have been recognised and welcomed by local residents. The questionnaires would also suggest, however, that additional improvements need to take place in relation to issues like the bin collection service, the maintenance of houses and the general upkeep of roads and open spaces within the Blakestown area.

Question 16

What is your view of the services being provided by local schools?

Statistical outcomes

Services provided by local schools	
Very Good	162 (27.6%)
Good	227 (38.6%)
Alright	100 (17.0%)
Poor	21 (3.6%)
Very Poor	4 (0.7%)
No comment/Don't know	74 (12.5%)
	588 (100%)

Direct Quotes:

'Could be up-graded'

'Too many in the classes'

'More homework classes, especially to help the slow kids'

'Crap – can't get my child into Early Start and I've been living here all my life'

'Very handy'

'Excellent, I turned out perfect'

'Could not be bettered anywhere'

'Blakestown Community School does a lot for teenagers in the area'

'Very good schools – no complaints'
'Doing a trojan job'
'Good but I'd love to see an after-school club'
'Do a great service, second to none'
'Schools are good but the Community School needs to be done up. It's very dirty inside and out'
'Classes are too big'
'Very good – a wide range of courses available in National School for parents'
'Very approachable – always willing to listen to parents'
'Providing a great service but more encouragement needed to keep teenagers in school'
'Could be more understanding and helpful to kids that are crying out for help'
'Primary School is great but Community School is a disgrace'
'No schools for problem kids eg. kids with reading and writing difficulties'
'Primary School is good and Secondary is very bad'
'Not enough pre-schools'
'Happy with both schools'
'Overcrowded and lack of choice of schools in this area'

Comments/Analysis

There is a fairly high level of satisfaction with the local schools in the Blakestown area. A total of 66.2% of the survey respondents felt that local schools are providing a very good or good service – this figure rises to 75.7% when one excludes those households who did not express any views about the quality of education being delivered in the Blakestown area. On the basis of the completed questionnaires, it is evident that local residents are particularly satisfied with the work being carried out within the local National School in the area. In relation to issues or recommendations to be considered further by relevant agencies and organisations, it is evident that many local residents are concerned about the supports which are currently available to pupils who are experiencing difficulties in their schools and in keeping pace with the rest of their classmates. A number of the survey respondents recommended the development of new initiatives and projects which could be specifically focused on this particular target group i.e. slow learners, potential early school leavers.

Question 17

What is your view of the services being provided by youth organisations in the area?

Statistical outcomes

Services being provided by youth organisations	
Very Good	23 (3.9%)
Good	68 (11.6%)
Alright	122 (20.7%)
Poor	119 (20.2%)
Very Poor	68 (11.6%)
No comment/Don't know	188 (32.0%)
	588 (100%)

Direct Quotes:

'Totally non-existent'

'Absolutely brutal'

'Not enough information given to residents'

'Good agencies but only reaches a certain percentage of the youth'

'Not aware of any'

'N.Y.P. is excellent'

'Not enough for youth to do'

'What service – they all seem to be out drinking on the roads'

'Only seem to work with kids at risk'

'Only for troubled kids, what about all the others'

'Not enough and not as creative as they should be'

'Very, very poor'

'Could be greatly improved'

'Not enough in the locality'

'Could be a lot more imaginative in their provision of services'

'Didn't know that we had any'

'Need a total overhaul in their services'

'Couldn't be any good as there's so much crime out there'

'Not enough kids activities being held, especially in the summer'

Comments/Analysis

There is not a high level of satisfaction with, or understanding of, the services being provided by youth groups and organisations in the Blakestown area. Only 15.5% of the surveyed households felt that these groups/organisations were providing a very good or good service whilst 32.0% of survey respondents did not know enough about the current youth services to be able to express an opinion about the work and effectiveness of these services. These types of outcomes would indicate that there is a need for youth service provision to be increased within the Blakestown area and for the existing youth groups/organisations to make local people more aware of their work and activities.

A final point in relation to youth service provision concerns the fact that many local people feel that there is a priority being given to young people ‘at risk’ and/or young people who have been involved in some type of anti-social behaviour. There is a fairly strong view that *all* children and young people in the Blakestown area should be given the opportunity to access youth services and programmes, and not just these young people who are involved in delinquent or anti-social behaviour.

Question 18

What is your view of the services being provided by FAS?

Statistical outcomes

Services being provided by FAS

Very Good	38 (6.5%)
Good	149 (25.3%)
Alright	167 (28.4%)
Poor	56 (9.5%)
Very Poor	16 (2.7%)
No comment/Don't know	162 (27.6%)
	588 (100%)

Direct Quotes:

‘Great for youth programmes’

‘FAS is great to get people back to work’

‘Could be more understanding of people’s needs’

‘A great help – Community Employment helps to take people off the dole’

‘Local Employment Service is very good’

‘Very important for early school leavers’

'Never heard from FAS in the last 22 years'
'Pity they couldn't have up to date information on their notice boards'
'Good for everyone'
'Could do more to support kids going to college to get work experience'
'Very good but could do with more information about FAS for young people'
'FAS helps the teenagers who have dropped out of school to better themselves'
'More courses need to be flexible and have childcare provision'
'Should be far more courses to choose from'
'Cut-backs in Community Employment are a disgrace'
'Very unhelpful and uncooperative'

Comments/Analysis

There is a fairly high level of satisfaction with the services provided by FAS. A total of 60.2% of survey respondents feel that FAS is providing a very good, good or alright service – this figure rises to 83.1% when one excludes those people who did not express any view about the work of FAS. It is of some concern, however, that 162 (27.6%) of the respondents were unable to offer any opinion about FAS – this outcome would suggest that FAS needs to promote its work and its activities more widely within the Blakestown area. The feedback from the survey respondents would also suggest that FAS needs to broaden and widen its perceived target groups – many local people are of the opinion that FAS is primarily focused on young people and, especially, early school leavers. There is a need to create awareness about the fact that FAS is interested in furthering the employment prospects of *all* people living within the Blakestown area – it is considered that the absence of a FAS Training Centre or a FAS Community Training Workshop in the Blanchardstown area has served to lessen the awareness which local people might have about the range of employment/training services which can be provided by FAS to all sections of the local population in Blanchardstown.

Question 19

What is your view of the services being provided by An Garda Síochána?

Statistical outcomes

Services provided by An Garda Síochána

Very Good	26 (4.4%)
Good	98 (16.7%)
Alright	218 (37.1%)
Poor	158 (26.9%)
Very Poor	82 (13.9%)
No comment/Don't know	6 (1.0%)
	588 (100%)

Direct Quotes:

'Garda Station near by but response is very bad – take too long to turn up'

'Never around – a total waste of time'

'Need to get their thumbs out'

'More foot patrols needed'

'There should be a lot more night patrols'

'Another invisible bunch'

'Doing the best they can'

'They cover such a big area they need more bodies than they have at present'

'The gardaí could get more involved in the local community'

'Utter waste of time'

'Doing the best they can considering the amount of trouble in Blanchardstown'

'Bad attitude to locals'

'Gardaí need to earn our respect and they can be quite corrupt and biased'

'We could do with more Garda patrols on foot'

'Policing methods need to be revised'

'Good but not fast enough'

'Brilliant – very proud of them'

'Afraid to do anything to the people that peddle the drugs'

'Could do better regarding joy-riding problem'

'The gardaí in this area are a joke. They don't keep the violence or the drug pushing down'

'Very infrequent patrols and when they do appear, they spend more time harassing local kids than dealing with the real criminals i.e. junkies, joy-riders and pushers'

'Far greater presence needed to make any real difference'

'Do their best, I suppose'

'Under-trained – not able to talk to youth'

'Can use bully-boy tactics when faced with certain situations'

'Have a bad attitude to people who live in this area'

'Very slow to react to all the anti-social behaviour in the area not to mention the drinking and drug abuse'

'Never see them'

'Need a lot more patrols in the community'

'Very hard to talk to a car or a van as it flies through the estate'

'They work hard'

'Not good enough – powerless and slow at reaching out to calls so maybe its due to a lack of funding'

'Very thin on the ground – whatever happened to community policing'

'Who are they? – where are they?'

'Poor – no rapport with the youth at all'

Comments/Analysis

There are mixed responses to the services provided by the gardaí in the Blakestown area – whilst 58.2% of local households feel that the gardaí are providing a very good, good or alright service, 40.8% of local respondents feel that the gardaí are providing either a poor or very poor service to local residents. On the basis of responses contained in the questionnaires it is evident that the main reasons for the dissatisfaction with the performance of An Garda Síochána include the attitude of the gardaí to local people (and especially to young people) living within the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates; the fact that gardaí often seem to be more interested in pursuing petty/minor offences rather than more major offences (eg. drug dealing); the perceived delays in responding to calls from local people about criminal or anti-social behaviour; and the absence of an effective and visible policing presence within the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates. It is considered important that the levels of satisfaction with the

performance of the gardaí should be improved and enhanced, given the ongoing and recurring references in the completed questionnaires to concerns which local people have about the extent of criminal and anti-social behaviour within the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates.

Question 20

What is your view of the services being provided by Dublin Bus?

Statistical outcomes

Services provided by Dublin Bus	
Very Good	42 (7.1%)
Good	181 (30.8%)
Alright	225 (38.3%)
Poor	101 (17.2%)
Very Poor	33 (5.6%)
No comment/Don't know	6 (1.0%)
	588 (100%)

Direct Quotes:

'To provide more buses for the public so they can get to their destination in time'

'Adequate but erratic on 220'

'Quite a good bus service'

'Need more buses at rush time'

'39 bus always runs a great service'

'Need more wheelchair friendly buses'

'City Swift, ha-ha, - bus comes every 10 minutes ha-ha!'

'Should have a lot more buses on'

'Off peak service is very unpredictable'

'It's a great service'

'Bad service – you could wait ½ hour and then 3 would come together'

'Still running on old fashioned service and haven't taken population explosion into account'

'Service has improved but the lack of services to Tallaght and Lucan is annoying – stops on a Sunday'

'More 39A and B's needed'

'Shelters need to be put up'

'Meant to come every 7 minutes – lucky to see one every 7 hours'

'They're a bit on the slow side'

'Absolutely hopeless'

'Could they not start earlier on Sundays as a lot of us have to work'

'A really great service'

'Need to improve on services and put on more buses'

'Bad – could be a lot more prompt'

'Very annoying – never get to the destination on time'

Comments/Analysis

There is a reasonable level of satisfaction with the service provided by Dublin Bus – 76.2% of survey respondents feel that Dublin Bus provides a very good, good or alright bus service. On the basis of responses to this question, it is evident that key issues in relation to Dublin Bus relate to the timekeeping of bus services (with many people feeling the buses do not keep to their scheduled times); and the lack of flexibility in bus routes within the Blanchardstown area (with bus routes going into the city centre of Dublin rather than across the various communities within Blanchardstown). Therefore it is considered useful to explore other transport options within the Blanchardstown area – these might involve a diversification of the current routes being operated by Dublin Bus and/or the development of community transport strategies which could service a larger proportion of the Blakestown area.

Question 21

What is your view of the services being provided by An Post?

Statistical outcomes

Services provided by An Post	
Very Good	109 (18.5%)
Good	271 (46.1%)
Alright	171 (29.1%)
Poor	29 (4.9%)
Very Poor	1 (0.2%)
No comment/Don't know	7 (1.2%)
	588 (100%)

Direct Quotes:

'Improved 100%'

'Great service. Very friendly staff;

'Great having new Post Office in Blanchardstown Shopping Centre'

'Adequate – we still have only one delivery a day for the past 24 years'

'More post boxes would be an improvement'

'Provide a good range of bill-pay services which are available on Saturdays'

'Too long queues all the time'

'A lot of lost post or else it is delivered to the wrong estate'

'Need at least two deliveries and on a Saturday'

'A very good service altogether'

'Good but the area is so big we need at least two deliveries'

'Improving bit by bit'

'Excellent – full marks to them'

Comments/Analysis

There is a high level of satisfaction with the services provided by An Post – 93.7% of local households in the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates feel that An Post provides a very good, good or alright service. Whilst some local residents have suggested that there should be more frequent delivery of post within their area, it is apparent that the large majority of local residents are satisfied with the service provided by An Post.

Question 22

What is your view of the medical services being provided for local residents?

Statistical outcomes

Medical services within the area

Very Good	62 (10.5%)
Good	164 (27.9%)
Alright	168 (28.6%)
Poor	108 (18.4%)
Very Poor	37 (6.3%)
No comment/Don't know	49 (8.3%)
	588 (100%)

Direct Quotes:

'Doctors could charge a bit less for their services and come out to see patients when they are really ill'

'The service is an absolute disgrace'

'Long waiting lists and its too dear to go private'

'We badly need a Childrens Hospital'

'We could do with our own Health Centre instead of having to go to Roselawn and queue for ages'

'Desperately need a Childrens Hospital'

'Sometimes surgeries are very overcrowded'

'Need Accident and Emergency Kids Hospital'

'OK if you have a day to spare in a hospital'

'Very bad, you have to be on your death bed before you'd get an appointment'

'Doctors and the Chemist are very good'

'Very good but no G.P. after-hours service'

'Bloody awful'

'Plenty of room for improvement'

'If you're paying cash you get a great service'

'Could do with a chemist'

'Doctors are full and you can't walk in without an appointment which you need 24 hours in advance'

'Excellent – but we need our own Health Centre in Blakestown'

'Doctors are too expensive'

'Need a chemist in the local area'

'I think Blanchardstown Hospital should see to kids under 12, rather than having to go to Temple St.'

'Need a local Health Centre'

'Doctor service is very good'

'Really need a Childrens Hospital – the area is so big'

'Very bad – no Childrens Hospital and very hard to see a doctor'

'No maternity hospital near-by'

'Doing a very good job'

'The need for appointments – how do you know if you're going to be sick tomorrow'

'I hope we will get a Children's Department in James Connolly Hospital because sometimes it could be a matter of life and death, with a child. Please consider the youth – after all its their futures that we have in our hands'

Comments/Analysis

There is a reasonable level of satisfaction with the medical services available to local residents – 67.0% of respondents to the questionnaire felt that the medical services are very good, good or alright whilst 24.7% of people felt that the medical services are poor or very poor. In relation to ways in which these services might be improved, there are three clear recommendations which recur on a regular basis in the questionnaires which were completed. These recommendations relate to (i) the establishment of a Health Centre to be located directly within the Blakestown area; (ii) the establishment of a chemist shop or pharmacy in the Blakestown area; and (iii) a Childrens Hospital or the creation of the childrens unit within an existing hospital – at present, children and their parents have to travel to Temple St. Hospital for child related illnesses and injuries.

Question 23

What is your view of the services being provided by local shops?

Statistical outcomes

Services provided by local shops	
Very Good	60 (10.2%)
Good	153 (26.0%)
Alright	188 (32.0%)
Poor	107 (18.2%)
Very Poor	55 (9.4%)
No comment/Don't know	25 (4.2%)
	588 (100%)

Direct Quotes:

'Need more of them'

'Serves its purpose I suppose'

'Great, apart from the litter'

'Alright but very expensive'

'Good but need a total make-over'

'Really need to improve'

'Seems to charge what they want'

'Very dirty on the outside'

'Provides everything but is over-priced'

'Good but customers using local shops cause a lot of dirt and noise for people living nearby'

'Charge far too much'

'We need another Londis because Londis shut down and all the other local shops put their prices up'

'The closing of Londis has reduced the rowdiness and drunken teenagers but it is missed for late night shopping'

'Need a face-lift'

'Dilapidated – looks like Beirut'

'I wouldn't send a dog to the local shops they're so bad'

'A dump – dogs urinating in the shop and food hygiene standards are a disgrace'

'Whitestown Stores is very pleasant and well run but unfortunately it attracts a crowd after closing time'

'Should stop ripping people off'

'Could do with a decent local store that would sell nice fresh goods'

'Blanchardstown Centre is great but people can only afford to do a weekly shop there and maybe buy an extra, on an odd occasion. What about having some cheaper local shops for people with very large families'

Comments/Analysis

There is a reasonable level of satisfaction with the services being provided by local shops in the Blakestown area – 68.2% of survey respondents feel that local shops are providing a very good, good or alright service. The main complaints in relation to local shops concerns the prices being charged within some of these shops and the dirt/litter which builds up around the shops. The responses to the questionnaires would suggest that a lot of local people do their main/household shopping in Blanchardstown Shopping Centre and only use the local shops on the odd occasion. For those people who do their shopping in the local area, it is apparent that many of these people would like to see a major upgrading and refurbishment of the local shops in order to make them more attractive and presentable.

Question 24

What is your view of the services being provided by the Department of Social Welfare/Department of Social and Family Affairs?

Statistical outcomes

Services provided by Social Welfare	
Very Good	24 (4.1%)
Good	157 (26.7%)
Alright	234 (39.8%)
Poor	81 (13.8%)
Very Poor	41 (7.0%)
No comment/Don't know	51 (8.6%)
	588 (100%)

Direct Quotes:

'Good – new office now opened up in Westend Office Park'

'They've got a very bad attitude'

'Could be quicker dealing with claims'

'They seem to be helpful'

'Good but could be a bit more compassionate towards people'

'You'd think it was coming out of their own pockets'

'Good since opened new office'

'Waiting too long for payments'

'Very mean – you would swear it was coming out of their own pockets'

'Giving too much to foreign nationals and not enough to Irish citizens'

'Not great that refugees always put first for everything'

'New facility in Westend is very good'

'Excellent but needs transport to get to it'

'I think it's a disgrace'

Comments/Analysis

Local people living in the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates are reasonably satisfied with the services being provided by the Department of Social Welfare (now named the Department of Social and Family Affairs) – 70.6% of the survey respondents feel this Department is providing a very good, good or alright service to local residents. On the basis of responses to the questionnaires it is apparent that the recent opening of the

new social welfare offices in Westend Office Park has been welcomed by many local residents – the existence of these offices now makes it easier for local people to access the services provided by the Department of Social and Family Affairs.

Question 25

What are the services that most need to be improved in the area?

Statistical outcomes?

Services which need to be improved most

Fingal County Council	–	199 (33.8%)
An Garda Síochána	–	160 (27.2%)
Youth services	–	63 (10.7%)
Dublin Bus	–	34 (5.8%)
Medical services	–	34 (5.8%)
Northern Area Health Board	–	24 (4.1%)
Local shops	–	24 (4.1%)
Local voluntary/community groups	–	18 (3.1%)
FAS	–	11 (1.9%)
Department of Social and Family Affairs	–	10 (1.7%)
Local schools	–	7 (1.2%)
An Post	–	4 (0.6%)
		588 (100%)

Name of Service/Agency	Listed in first three of services/agencies in need Of improvement
An Garda Síochána	– 377 (64.1% of respondents)
Fingal County Council	– 366 (62.2% of respondents)
Youth services	– 230 (39.1% of respondents)
Dublin Bus	– 161 (27.4% of respondents)
Local shops	– 138 (24.5% of respondents)
Medical services	– 131 (22.3% of respondents)
Local voluntary/community groups	– 117 (19.9% of respondents)
Northern Area Health Board	– 83 (14.1% of respondents)

Local schools	–	47 (8.0% of respondents)
Department of Social and Family Affairs	–	41 (7.0% of respondents)
FAS	–	40 (6.8% of respondents)
An Post	–	33 (5.6% of respondents)
		1,764

Comments/Analysis

The outcomes from this question would clearly indicate that local residents living in the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates feel that Fingal County Council and An Garda Síochána are the two organisations which most need to improve the ways they deliver their services to local people in the Blakestown area. The levels of dissatisfaction with the services provided by these organisations are considerably higher than the dissatisfaction rating for other organisations and agencies providing services in the Blakestown area – over 60% of the survey respondents named either Fingal County Council or An Garda Síochána as the one organisation/service which most needed to be improved.

Apart from Fingal County Council and An Garda Síochána there is also a fairly strong view amongst local residents that the youth services could be improved within the area. There is a reasonable level of satisfaction with the services provided by Dublin Bus, local shops, medical services, local voluntary/community groups, the Northern Area Health Board, local schools, the Department of Social and Family Affairs, FAS and An Post.

8. FACILITIES IN THE AREA

Question 26

What types of facilities and amenities might be developed in the open spaces within your area?

Statistical outcomes

Facility or amenity	–	Numbers
Play areas and playgrounds		380
Football pitches	–	67
Landscaping of open spaces	–	46
Sports Centre	–	37
Clean-up of open spaces	–	34
Youth Club	–	22
Benches and seating	–	19
Summer projects for children	–	14
Others	–	43

Direct Quotes:

‘There are no open spaces left to develop’

‘Supervised play-grounds to keep the kids off the roads and work-shops for youth to keep them off the streets’

‘All weather pitch that can’t be burned’

‘I’d like to see it spent on ramps and some work done on the houses, especially railings for the walls’

‘Could do with an area that kids could use for Roller Blades and Skateboards’

‘Clubs, play areas, anything to keep the kids busy’

‘All weather sports facilities’

‘Proper meeting place for the Elderly’

‘What about an indoor sports hall’

‘An adventure playground’

‘Safe, supervised playground with swings and slides’

‘Facilities for the children of the area’

‘What Fingal County Council are doing at the moment with the Basketball Court is great and a nice play area for the kids would be even better’

‘An area for concerts and big community gatherings’

‘A decent play area with swings and slides for the kids’

'Full adventure playground'

'A bit of greenery would be nice'

'Make pavements (full of broken glass and litter) more wheelchair friendly'

'Instead of building more houses we should build a pony club, play-ground, discos and clubs that will appeal to the kids of the streets'

Comments/Analysis

There is overwhelming local support for the development of play areas and play facilities for children and young people who live within the Blakestown area. A total of 380 survey respondents (i.e. 64.6%) felt that playgrounds and other play facilities should be constructed within the open spaces in the area – this total of 380 responses in favour of play facilities is more than all of the other responses put together. This is an indication of the level of support which exists for the development of play areas and facilities, and of the desire of many parents to provide positive and constructive play/leisure opportunities for their children.

Question 27

If money was allocated to the area for facilities, what would you like to see it spent on?

Statistical outcomes

Money to be spent on		Numbers
Play areas and playgrounds	–	243
Youth services and youth clubs	–	168
Football pitches	–	46
Sports Centre	–	37
Clean-ups/upkeep of the area	–	31
Swimming Pool	–	26
After school clubs	–	24
Summer projects	–	21
Landscaping	–	20
To rid the area of drugs	–	19
Community Centre	–	15
Others	–	57

Direct Quotes:

- 'A Garda Depot in Blakestown/Sheepmoor Avenue to deal more positively with joyriders'*
- 'A youth club but pay helpers because people won't do volunteer work any more (those days are gone)'*
- 'Creative facilities for the youth'*
- 'Promoting multicultural activities in the area'*
- 'More sports facilities especially a swimming pool'*
- 'Improving the look of the area'*
- 'Day care centre'*
- 'A football tournament and sports competitions'*
- 'Houses upgraded and decent heating and walls built'*
- 'Somewhere for kids to play safely'*
- 'Some houses for the homeless'*
- 'Renovation of houses'*
- 'Providing an Irish speaking secondary school'*
- 'Community house and upkeep of area'*
- 'Build a clubhouse for Mountview Boys and Girls F.C.'*

Comments/Analysis

There is widespread support for the allocation of any available funding to projects, activities, facilities and services which are targeted at children and young people who are living within the Blakestown area. A total of 411 households who completed the questionnaire (i.e. 69.9%) felt that money should either be spent on play areas and playgrounds for the younger children and/or on youth services and programmes for the older children/teenagers within the area. The responses to this question serve to re-enforce the fact that the lack of facilities and amenities for children and young people is a clear and outstanding need within the Blakestown area. It is considered that the development of facilities and services for children and young people should be one of the most urgent priorities for relevant agencies/organisations; and that the development of these facilities and services will make it less likely that some young people living within the area will engage in destructive and anti-social behaviour or activity.

Question 28

What types of activities/services might take place in such a facility?

Statistical outcomes

Activities/Services		Numbers
Play activities for younger children	–	185
Sports and leisure activities	–	177
Youth programmes and services	–	146
Childcare services	–	77
Cultural activities	–	57
Indoor football	–	52
Summer projects	–	27
Others	–	54

Comments/Analysis

The outcomes from this question would serve to emphasise the priority which is being given by local residents to the provision of facilities and services for children and young people within the Blakestown area. Out of a total of 775 responses to this question concerning activities which might take place in a local community facility, 516 responses (66.6%) related specifically to children and young people (eg. play activities for younger children, youth programmes and services, childcare services etc). It is evident that parents are far more concerned about the provision of services and facilities for their children than they are about services for themselves.

Question 29

Would you or any member of your family be willing to volunteer to support activities in such a facility?

Statistical outcomes

Willing to volunteer	Numbers
Yes	282 (48.0%)
No	212 (36.0%)
Not sure	94 (16.0%)
	588 (100%)

Direct Quotes:

'Need more for residents of the area – maybe a place for parents to go once a week so they can chat and unwind from their daily problems with people that are in the same situation'

Comments/Analysis

It is encouraging that nearly half of the households (i.e. 48.0%) which were surveyed stated that people within their households/families would be willing to volunteer in any new community facility to be set up in the Blakestown area. This outcome is a positive demonstration of the desire of many local people to improve the services and facilities which are currently available within the Blakestown area (especially for children and young people); and of their personal commitment to volunteering time and skills in the organisation and running of activities which might take place in any new community facility. It is also considered that the people who said that they would be willing to become involved in a new community facility would also be prepared to volunteer in the work of other community based groups and organisations.

9. YOUTH SERVICES/FACILITIES

Question 30

What youth services are needed for young people in the area?

Statistical outcomes

Youth services for young people		Numbers
Drop in centre/Place for young people to socialise	–	124
More youth clubs	–	122
Organised sports	–	95
Discos for children and young people	–	79
After school clubs	–	58
Football clubs/pitches	–	51
More youth services	–	45
Drugs/Alcohol awareness	–	30
Education courses and programmes	–	27
More spaces for children and young people	–	17
Arts and crafts activities	–	14
More information about youth services	–	14
Others	–	44

Direct Quotes:

'Already well provided for and very good'

'More education about smoking, drinking and drugs'

'Social clubs for boys and girls eg. dance, football, arts and crafts'

'Youth club with pool table etc. to keep them from hanging around'

'A lot of kids are now trying drugs and becoming addicts'

'Help in getting jobs and finding out what suits them'

'Need to restore Foroige Club again'

'Take them off the street and give them something to do'

'The odd well supervised disco would be good'

'Youth Club to keep them off the streets'

'Take kids away on week-end breaks'

'A service for the young to get them out of drugs'

'Need a drop in centre to show the youth what not to do'

'Anything to keep them off the streets'

'A place for teenagers to hang out, play music, talk – anything that keeps them off the streets'

'More FAS courses to give working skills in order to get some form of employment'

'Good youth services which will get both boys and girls involved in loads of activities'

'Youth Club with plenty of activities'

'Adventure clubs and discos'

'A large variety of sports to encourage all the kids'

'Personal development and counselling'

'Accessible venue for music, song and dance'

'A Youthreach or WEB project'

'A summer project to keep the kids out of trouble'

'More programmes for drink/drugs awareness'

'Our kids are bored. They've got low self esteem and don't want to get out of Blakestown. When they do resort to drink and drugs we disown them. How can we change any of this?'

'There's a total lack of youth facilities which means that the kids run wild day and night resulting in vandalism and general messing around'

'More summer projects – there's nothing for the kids to do for months and months except hang around the streets and get into trouble'

Comments/Analysis

Many respondents to this question have made a clear and direct link between the provision of more youth facilities and services (on the one hand) and keeping young people 'off the streets' and away from the temptations of drugs and alcohol (on the other hand). In the opinion of a significant number of people living in the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates there is an urgent need to provide more facilities and programmes for children and young people, facilities and programmes which would provide a positive alternative to involvement in other more destructive and anti-social activities. In relation to the types of amenities and services which might be developed for children and young people in the Blakestown area, 420 responses (58.3%) to this question related to four specific activities i.e. drop-in centre and place for young people to meet and to socialise;

more youth clubs within the area; more organised sports activities; and the organisation of discos for children and young people.

Question 31

Do you know what youth services are available in the area?

Statistical outcomes

Know of youth services in the area	Numbers
Yes	58 (9.9%)
No	530 (90.1%)

Comments/Analysis

There is a very limited awareness and understanding from local residents in the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates about the work being carried by youth groups and youth organisations within the Blakestown area. This type of outcome is a reflection of (i) the fact that there are not a sufficient or adequate number of youth groups/organisations in Blakestown and (ii) the need for existing groups to promote their work and activities in a more effective manner. In relation to local residents who responded positively to the question 'do you know what youth services are available in the area?' the groups and organisations with the highest recognition levels were the Neighbourhood Youth Project, the Working to Enhance Blanchardstown (WEB) Project and local boys/girls football teams.

Question 32

Are you or any member of your family involved in youth services? If yes, which youth service/activity?

Statistical outcomes

Involved in youth services	
Yes	33 (5.6%)
No	555 (94.4%)

Comments/Analysis

There is only a relatively small proportion of local people living in the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates who are actively involved in supporting the work of youth groups and youth organisations within the area. However, it is considered that the participation of

5.6% of local residents is not dissimilar to many other districts within Dublin. It is estimated that around 10% – 12% of local people volunteer their services to some form of community activity or endeavour and that only a certain proportion of this 10% – 12% would be involved in activities relating to children and young people. In this context, the participation of 33 people (i.e. 5.6%) from the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates in youth activities is considered to be a reasonable level of participation.

In relation to the youth groups and organisations with which local people are involved, the following table details these groups/organisations and the levels of participation by local people:

Name of group/organisation	Number of local volunteers
Neighbourhood Youth Project	12
Mountview Boys and Girls	
Football Club	5
Rainbows	3
Shrangri La Womens Group	3
WEB	2
St. Peregrines GAA Club	2
Others	6
	33

On the basis of these outcomes, it is evident that participation in the work of the Neighbourhood Youth Project and in the activities of various sporting groups account for a fairly high proportion of local people who are involved in supporting youth groups and youth organisations within the Blakestown area.

Question 33

What supports do you think are needed to help young people stay at school?

Statistical outcomes

Supports needed	Numbers
More parental involvement and encouragement	– 118
More interest and encouragement from teachers	– 65
After school/Homework clubs and groups	– 58
Better career guidance	– 58

More relevant/interesting curriculum	–	51
Parents and teachers to communicate better	–	48
Change in attitude from teachers	–	47
Payments/grants to stay at school	–	40
Emphasise links between qualifications/education and jobs	–	37
Smaller class sizes	–	20
Out of school youth services	–	18
Educating parents about value of education	–	16
Extra classes and grinds	–	12
Others	–	49

Direct Quotes:

'I think it is up to parents to encourage their kids as the local schools are very good'

'Cheaper education and cheaper college fees'

'Unfortunately there is not much if the desire to go further is not there'

'Make it a lot more fun'

'Teachers need to be much more understanding of kids with special needs'

'Bring them around the prisons and show them the poor kids on drugs who are locked up there'

'Kids aren't interested in conventional education. So a more varied learning programme might help'

'Educate parents so they can encourage the kids'

'Sympathetic second level school, raising their expectations'

'Kids need to be made aware of how important a good education is'

'People who dropped out to give talks and explain its not easy without an education'

'I believe support comes from within the family throughout the child's school life'

'Bit of confidence boosting needed'

'Parents getting involved with the schools'

'I think teachers should support the kids more'

'Your Ma and Da'

'Counselling for kids that come from a troubled background'

'More communication between kids and teachers'

'Welfare Officer to inform kids and parents of the benefits of completing their education'

'If secondary school teachers had more respect for the kids then their education would be finished'

'Good career guidance in all aspects of education'

'More support from home i.e. making sure homework is done'

'Let kids have a say in some of the classes and let the teachers stop acting like children'

'Government should give each student an allowance of €40 per week to stay in school'

'More understanding of their home lives. Just give them a chance to voice what problems they have and help them come to terms with these'

'The Youthreach is very good. They have it in Drogheda. The teachers take a better approach to the kids'

'Teachers need to encourage kids from an early age but not just the "gifted" ones, all of them'

'All youth to be treated with dignity and special needs children to be helped more'

'Teachers need to lose their attitude'

'Parents need to advise kids to stay in school and not kick them out to earn money at a certain age'

'Help for slow learners so they don't feel like failures'

'Awareness of what can be achieved and the rewards for going to college'

'Teachers not to be so hard on them and then they will stay longer'

'Help for early school leavers with reading and writing problems'

'If a school child has problems the Welfare Officer should talk to the child outside the school environment to find out just what the problems are'

'More fun to be put into school to keep the pupils interested'

'Run a course showing how much they'd get on the dole and how many bills they'd have to pay and that there is more to life than having babies'

'My daughter was taken to Trinity College for a week with Blakestown Secondary School – it worked really well as a confidence booster'

Comments/Analysis

The respondents to the questionnaire recommended a whole range of different actions and interventions in relation to ways in which young people might be encouraged to stay at school for a longer period. In clustering these responses together it is evident that many local residents are of the opinion that both parents and teachers have a very

significant role to play in the educational development of children and young people who are living within the Blakestown area. From the 637 individual responses to the question concerning ways to keep young people at school, 146 (22.9%) related to the role and responsibilities of parents eg. more parental involvement and encouragement, educating parents about the value of education. A further 178 responses (27.9%) related to the role of teachers eg. more interest and encouragement from teachers, better career guidance, change in attitude from teachers. A total of 48 responses (i.e. 7.5%) suggested better communications and understanding between parents and teachers. Therefore, in total, 372 responses (58.3%) concerned the various roles of parents and teachers. This type of outcome would clearly demonstrate the need for a holistic and integrated approach to the issue of early school leaving – an approach which involves the young people themselves, their parents and their teachers/school.

10. COMMUNITY ACTIVITY/COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Question 34

Are you or other members of your family involved in any local community/voluntary group or organisation? If so, please specify

Statistical outcomes

Involved in local group or organisation	Numbers
Yes	75 (12.8%)
No	513 (87.2%)

Comments/Analysis

There is a reasonable level of participation by local residents in the work and activities of local community groups and organisations in the Blakestown area – on the basis of the responses to the questionnaire it is estimated that about 12.8% of local households have a family member who is involved in supporting the work of local groups and organisations. The groups and organisations with which local people are involved is as follows:

Name of group/organisation		Numbers
Local sporting groups and organisations	–	17
Neighbourhood Youth Project	–	12
Whitestown Estate Management	–	7
Blakestown Community Resource Centre	–	6
Dancing clubs/groups	–	4
Whitestown Tenants Association	–	4
Others (11 different groups)	–	21

The outcomes from this question demonstrates the range of community and voluntary groups which are providing services to local people living in the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates – the 75 residents contributing their time and skills in a voluntary capacity are involved in a total of 18 different community based groups and organisations.

Question 35

Can you name any of the local community/voluntary groups and organisations which are active in the area?

Statistical outcomes

Able to name local
group or organisation

Yes	208 (35.4%)
No	379 (64.6%)

Comments/Analysis

There is a relatively low level of public awareness and knowledge about the scale and extent of community activity in the Blakestown area. Nearly two-thirds of the questionnaire respondents were unable to name any community, sporting or voluntary group/organisation which is providing services and activities within the Blakestown area. This level of understanding and awareness of the work of local groups is disappointing and serves to emphasise the need for mechanisms to be developed (eg. information days, promotional events) which would increase awareness about the range of community based groups and organisations which are working in the Blakestown area.

In relation to the 208 questionnaire respondents who could name a local community or voluntary group which is carrying out work in the area, the following groups/organisations had the highest recognition levels: Blakestown Community Resource Centre; Neighbourhood Youth Project; Youth Initiative; St. Vincent de Paul; local sporting groups and organisations (especially soccer and GAA clubs); Community Drugs Team; Whitestown Estate Management; Rainbows; Whitestown Tenants Association; and the WEB project.

Question 36

What is your view of the community spirit within your area?

Statistical outcomes

	View of community support in your area		
	Sheepmoor	Whitestown	Totals
Strong	23 (11.9%)	60 (15.2%)	83 (14.1%)
Alright	11 (5.7%)	46 (11.7%)	57 (9.7%)
Weak	12 (6.2%)	58 (14.7%)	70 (11.9%)
Very Weak	148 (76.2%)	230 (58.4%)	378 (64.3%)
	194 (100%)	394 (100%)	588 (100%)

Direct Quotes:

Nowadays people just don't care'

'Its bad – we need a lot more communication between people to know how we can improve things in the area'

'At the moment, there's no community spirit at all'

'A very strong community spirit at present'

'In years gone by it was great but now all the active people have gone and nobody really cares anymore'

'Lack of get up and go in the area'

'Not as strong as it was – little opportunity for pride in community'

'There is none – people need to stick together'

'I feel there is a strong sense of community but there are a few who spoil it for everybody'

'Most people are helpful in general but there are some who couldn't care less'

'Its non-existent'

'Same people get involved all the time'

'It has its moments i.e. the World Cup. But most people keep to themselves'

'Good spirit but can break down very quickly'

'Only some people – and the ones that help all the time are the same people'

'Strong on certain issues and weak on others'

'Strong on our stretch of the road'

'At the moment there's very little community spirit but in the early days it was very strong'

'When you knock on doors most people are willing to get involved most of the time'

'In certain areas community spirit is good but its not good as a whole'

'Strong community spirit with older generation'

'Because of anti-social behaviour many people have now withdrawn from community involvement'

'When needed always ready to help each other'

'The spirit is very weak. Nobody pulls together in our community'

'People are inclined to look after No. 1 – with some exceptions'

'I was involved in Sheepmoor Residents for a long time but due to lack of interest it folded. You can try your best to improve things around you, but if most people don't give a toss its like banging your head off a brick wall'

'Blanchardstown may have grown over the last 20 years but facilities haven't grown with it'

'If everyone gave a little help around the estate, it would be a lot better, instead of leaving it to the same few'

Comments/Analysis

The morale of local residents living within the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates is currently at a fairly low ebb – only 14.1% of questionnaire respondents feel that the community spirit in the area is strong whilst 76.2% of respondents feel that community spirit is either weak or very weak. The responses to the questionnaires would suggest that community spirit has declined significantly in recent years with many of the local residents saying that community spirit used to be a lot stronger in the past. There is a strong sense that local people are more inclined to keep to themselves and are less inclined to get involved in local community activities or projects – for reasons to do with an increasingly busy lifestyle, the fear of getting ridiculed or harassed if you do get involved and a feeling of hopelessness (eg. *'sure, what is the point – nothing is ever going to change'*).

There is also a view, however, that community spirit can be revived and recreated within the Blakestown area and that more people can be encouraged to become involved in community activities. Responses to this question in the survey would suggest that there are a significant number of people in the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates who would be willing to volunteer their services and their skills/expertise to the work of local groups in the Blakestown area. A key challenge for the next few years will be to develop strategies which would aim to build up the community spirit in Blakestown and to encourage more local people to become more involved in the ongoing development of the communities in which they live.

Question 37

What would support/encourage you to become more involved or actively volunteer in your community?

Statistical outcomes

A total of 282 (48.0%) of the questionnaire respondents could not identify any particular factor which would encourage them to become actively involved within their local community.

Of the remaining 308 (52.0%) respondents, the following are the main factors which would encourage greater participation in local community activities:

Factors to encourage participation		Numbers
More time to allow me to get involved	–	59
More information on work/activities of local groups	–	48
For more local people to become involved	–	46
A feeling that I am doing something for the kids/children within the area	–	43
I am already involved	–	36
Stronger community spirit	–	33
Encouragement and advice about how to get involved	–	28
Getting to know more local people in the area	–	19
More facilities/centres to meet	–	17
Others	–	21

Direct Quotes:

'If Fingal County Council pulled their weight'

'If I saw things being done for the kids I'd have no problems being a volunteer'

'Involved in the past and it was thankless. Discos were run and the centre was vandalised'

'Tell my boss to give me more time off'

'If they had youth clubs, I would help'

'If groups were run properly'

'Projects that I thought would make a real difference'

'To see small children have somewhere to play. I try to keep my 2 year old and 5 year old in off the road but they want to play outside'

'If everyone took an interest'

'I did volunteer work at discos and summer projects years ago but got sick of the cheeky brats I was trying to help'

'If police and Fingal County Council made sure certain tenants lived properly and respected others'

'More information asking for help, when help is needed'

'Hard to get involved when you don't know what's happening. An Open Day in the Resource Centre would help'

'Nothing as most teenagers have no respect for adults at all'

Comments/Analysis

Whilst a large number of local residents could not name any particular factor which would encourage greater participation in community activities, the residents who did respond to this question clearly identified the need for more information about local groups, for more local people to become involved in the work of local groups and for a stronger community spirit within the Blakestown area. In relation to the provision of information to residents, local groups should ensure that as many people as possible are aware of the work in which they are involved – in addition, if appropriate, these local groups should inform residents that they are actively seeking volunteers (the responses to the questionnaire would suggest that local residents are not always clear about whether local groups are looking for volunteers).

In relation to the need for a stronger community spirit it is evident that the revival of community morale and a greater sense of hope and optimism about the future of the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates would be significant factors in encouraging more participation from residents in the work of local groups and organisations in the Blakestown area.

11. HEALTH AND WELL BEING

Question 38

What are the main issues in relation to illegal drug use in the area?

Statistical outcomes

A total of 123 (20.9%) questionnaire respondents could not name any key issue in relation to illegal drug use within the area.

Of the remaining 465 (79.1%) respondents, the following are the main issues which were identified by these respondents in relation to illegal drug use in the Blakestown area:

Main issues concerning		Numbers
illegal drug use		
Drugs too easily available	–	100
Not enough gardaí to stop drug dealers	–	69
Young people becoming addicted to drugs (‘junkies’)/Young lives being destroyed	–	66
Too many drug pushers in the area	–	64
Not enough information/education about drugs	–	52
Lack of drugs rehabilitation services	–	48
Lack of drugs treatment facilities	–	44
Get drug pushers out of the area	–	31
Create a drugs free zone	–	27
Gangs hanging around and using drugs	–	23
Violent incidents involving drug users	–	22
Others	–	31

Direct Quotes:

‘Drugs sold on every street corner and in the view of local schoolchildren’

‘Drugs are just all over the place’

‘Too many gangs hanging about and drugs being sold openly’

‘Not aware of any problems’

‘Drugs use is on a very large scale and growing every day’

‘Danger to young kids who are picking up needles’

‘The police aren’t dealing with the dealers’

‘Drugs available too openly’

'Don't know, junkies have no part in my life so I leave well enough alone'

'Fingal County Council not doing much to remove pushers from houses in area'

'Many kids got roped into drugs because we haven't got a Clinic'

'Getting the big fish who are preying on the kids'

'No real after-care for ex-druggies – no jobs etc.'

'People dealing on corners and in houses. Syringes in gardens etc.'

'G.P's over-prescribing tablets, needles for sale'

'Poor attitude of community to heroin addicts'

'Doctors to be monitored for prescribing addictive drugs for depression and other social problems'

'Shoot the pushers'

'Garda action on known drug houses'

'The trouble and the crime that comes with it'

'People who are known pushers being sent to this estate'

'My kids finding used syringes while playing'

'Under age kids from 11-12 are visible smoking hash on green areas'

'While we are sure it happens, we are not aware enough'

'Heroin because nobody can ever get out of it'

'They are being supplied to locals by other locals'

'Too easy to come by'

'Week-end gangs'

'Dirty Needles'

'Anti social behaviour that it brings'

'The fucking syringes outside my house – its sick'

'Drug users leaving needles lying around and if they were to drop any of their gear and a young child was to get a hold of it'

'Danger to kids and an environmental health hazard'

'Open dealing and the police won't do a thing'

'Addiction leads to crime and the area will eventually become run-down if it keeps up'

'As the posters said, "You know who they are" and so do the Gardaí know too – so why is nothing being done? What will it be like for the next generation'

'I was not aware that we have a drug problem in the area'

'Needles on the hill and in the grass where the kids play'

'Nobody seems to care that drugs are being dealt openly, in the middle of the day'

'Its not being dealt with'

'People selling drugs openly on the streets and from their homes'

'Peer pressure with not enough things for the youth to do'

'Too many parents let their kids get away with it – let on that hash is not harmful'

'Gardaí turning a blind eye to many users in the area'

'This area does nothing about drug abuse at all – nearest help centre is Corduff'

'Finger the pushers and take them out of the equation and set up a detox centre'

'My son and my brother are both involved in illegal drug abuse– they live in Huntstown and are planning to move back here'

'Sheer boredom, nothing else to do'

Comments/Analysis

The responses to this question would certainly indicate that local people feel the main issues in relation to illegal drug use concern the supply of drug use into the Blakestown area (rather than issues relating to drugs prevention/education and drugs treatment and rehabilitation). Answers concerning the supply of drugs (eg. drugs too easily available, not enough gardaí to stop dealers, too many drug pushers in the area) account for 287 (48.8%) of the responses to this question whilst answers concerning drugs prevention/education (eg. more information in schools, more information for parents) account for 52 (9.1%) of the responses and answers concerning drugs treatment/rehabilitation (eg. drugs treatment centres and facilities, drugs rehabilitation programmes) account for 92 (16.0%) of the responses. In overall terms, however, it is evident that many people clearly identify the need to focus on all aspects of the drugs issue/problem (eg. supply, education, prevention, treatment, rehabilitation) rather than merely focusing on the supply of drugs within the Blakestown area.

Question 39

Where do you get your information about health?

Statistical outcomes

Source of information	Numbers
Healthcare professionals (especially doctors)	205 (33.2%)
Friends and neighbours	157 (25.4%)
Media/Books	157 (25.4%)
Family members	57 (9.3%)
Internet	28 (4.6%)
Others	13 (2.1%)
	617 (100%)

Comments/Analysis

In relation to ways in which local residents find out information about health issues, it is evident that the three main information sources are healthcare professionals (especially doctors and public health nurses); advice and information provided by friends/neighbours; and information picked up through television, radio, newspapers, books etc. These three information channels (i.e. healthcare professionals, neighbours, media/books) account for a total of 84.0% of the responses to the question concerning sources of information on health issues.

Question 40

Do you take part in any physical activity (including sport, recreation, household work)? If so, please specify

Statistical outcomes

Take part in physical activity	Numbers
Yes	431 (73.3%)
No	157 (26.7%)

Type of physical activity	Numbers
Walking	209
Housework	163
Swimming	26
Gymnasium	26

Gardening	–	19
Football	–	17
Dancing	–	15
Cycling	–	12
Other	–	32

Comments/Analysis

A reasonably high proportion of the households who participated in the survey are involved in taking some form of physical exercise i.e. over 73% of the households in the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estate. In relation to the different types of physical activity the outcomes from the survey would indicate that walking and housework are, by far, the most popular physical activities – 372 (71.7%) of the survey responses named walking and/or housework as the main physical activities.

Question 41

How many days, if any, in an average week, do you walk for 30 minutes or more?

Statistical outcomes

Number of days		Numbers
1 Day	–	9 (1.5%)
2 Days	–	59 (10.0%)
3 Days	–	72 (12.2%)
4 Days	–	60 (10.2%)
5 Days	–	72 (12.2%)
6 Days	–	22 (3.7%)
7 Days	–	52 (8.8%)
No Days	–	244 (41.4%)
		588 (100%)

Comments/Analysis

The outcomes from this question would indicate that most people in the Sheepmoor and Whietstown estates would walk for at least 30 minutes each day for at least one day per week. On the basis of responses to the question it is evident that most of the walking which takes place is for functional reasons and for reasons of necessity (eg. leaving children to school, going to Blanchardstown Shopping Centre) rather than a particular desire to walk in order to become fitter or to engage in physical activity.

Question 42

What stops you from taking exercise and physical activity?

Statistical outcomes

Factors preventing exercise and physical activity		Numbers
Family responsibilities and commitments	–	108
No available time	–	85
Work commitments	–	85
Illness/Disability	–	64
Too lazy	–	44
Weather	–	43
Age	–	31
Too Dangerous	–	24
Nothing	–	38
Others	–	27
		588

Direct Quotes:

'Having to bring four kids with me when I go'

'I don't like to go walking when its dark because its not safe because the streets aren't well lit'

'Its just too dangerous to go out at night'

'I think walking is enough'

'The gym is too expensive'

'No child-minder as its too dear'

'The scumbags and junkies hanging around'

'Physical disability'

'Always on the go'

'Too many family commitments'

'Someone has to do the house-work'

'Having to be around the kids a lot'

'Too dangerous to go walking at night'

'Fear of walking alone in the area at night'

'Nothing at all, I'm just too lazy'

'Too busy watching over my kids'

'A fear of druggies and dealers at every street corner'

Comments/Analysis

The main reason for local people not partaking in exercise and physical activity relates to the perceived amount of time which would be required to participate in exercise/physical activities. The top three responses to this question (i.e. family commitments, lack of time, work commitments) would suggest that if local people were not so busy looking after other aspects of their lives, they might then have more time for exercise and physical activities. This absence of available time is, in the opinion of the survey respondents, the single greatest obstacle/barrier which prevents them exercising or becoming involved in physical activity.

Question 43

Has anyone in your household had an accident requiring medical attention (either in the house or outside) in the last year?

Statistical outcomes

Accident requiring medical attention	Numbers
Yes	106 (18.0%)
No	482 (82.0%)

Comments/Analysis

A total of 106 households surveyed in the research project have had a family member who required medical attention for an accident which occurred within the last 12 months period. The responses from the questionnaires would suggest that most of accidents were dealt with by a doctor/GP and that a relatively small minority of these accidents required hospital attention. This outcome would suggest that many of the accidents were of a relatively minor nature.

Question 44

If the following health promotion and information sessions were held in your area, would you attend them?

Statistical outcomes

Sessions on the following	Interested in attending	
	Yes	No
Stop smoking	346 (58.5%)	242 (41.5%)
Physical activity	409 (69.6%)	179 (30.4%)

Eating for health	397 (67.5%)	191 (32.5%)
Accident prevention	314 (53.4%)	174 (46.6%)

Comments/Analysis

There is a reasonable level of interest in the organization of health promotion and health awareness programmes in the Blanchardstown area. If these programmes were to be organized, it is evident that the most popular topic (out of the four detailed in the questionnaire) would relate to information and advice about exercise and physical activities. There is a lesser degree of interest in stop smoking, eating for health and accident prevention programmes.

Question 45

What additional health services do you think need to be provided in the area?

Statistical outcomes

Additional health services to be provided		Numbers
Accident and Emergency Hospital (especially for children)	–	150
Health Centre	–	114
Drugs treatment and rehabilitation	–	60
Womens Health Centre / Well Woman Clinic	–	44
More doctors	–	32
Rape Crisis Centre / Womens Refuge	–	29
Drugs and Alcohol Information	–	29
Nursing Home	–	28
First Aid Centre	–	18
Clinic/Centre for Senior Citizens	–	18
Others	–	56

Direct Quotes:

'No – health service is good'

'The cost of the Accident and Emergency service is outrageous and this dissuades me from attending, unless in an utmost emergency'

'Schools don't check teeth and kids should be able to have check-ups with parents at their dentists'

'Nobody wants drugs clinics next door to them but they are needed'

'A stronger baby nurse service. I have a three year old child and the baby nurse has knocked once in three years'

'More efficient Accident and Emergency in Blanchardstown Hospital'

'Casualty Department for small kids'

'A drug treatment centre – we need one badly'

'Childrens Hospital with Maternity Wing'

'Schools should be provided with whatever treatment for outbreaks of lice etc. – parents should not have to pay for this. It should be provided for by the Health Board'

'Early medical cards for Senior Citizens so you don't have to wait until 70'

'Overhaul in health service is needed nationwide but certain areas like Blakestown have health problems which occur way above the national average'

'A chemist and a Health Centre'

'Free condoms and the pill for teens'

'More to be done for the drug addicts'

'Counselling and alternative healing such as reflexology'

'Aromatherapy'

'Drug awareness education and support'

'A hospital to cater for all ages'

Comments/Analysis

There is a significant level of support for the development of an Accident and Emergency unit/hospital which is focused especially upon the needs of children and for the establishment of a Health Centre in the Blakestown area – these two recommendations account for 264 (42.7%) of the responses to this question concerning health services within the Blakestown area. There is also a reasonable level of support for the provision of services targeted at drug users/addicts; and for women who might require specialist screening/health services and women who have been victims of domestic/sexual violence.

12. CHILDCARE AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Question 46

To what extent are your childcare needs being met?

Statistical outcomes

A total of 295 (50.2%) of questionnaire respondents stated that they had no particular childcare needs.

In relation to the remaining 293 (48.2%) respondents the following represents the extent to which their childcare needs are being met:

Yes / Completely	15 (5.1%)
Yes / In a limited way	114 (38.9%)
Not at all	164 (56.0%)
	293 (100%)

Direct Quotes:

'Because I work in a community crèche my child has a place but loads of others aren't so lucky'

'Childrens facilities are so expensive'

'Not at all as I have a special needs child'

'My mother minds the child for one hour after school until I get home from work at 3.30'

'There are no childcare facilities I can afford'

'My daughters can't work because they couldn't afford to get their children minded'

'Not being met now and probably never will be met'

'I care for my own kids because of cost'

'None, my son did not get into the local playgroup or Early Start school and I live in the area'

'My mother has to mind my kids'

'Excellent – they're met by ourselves'

'The only help for a disabled child is from St. Vincents, Navan Road'

'Hopelessly inadequate'

Comments/Analysis

The childcare needs of parents and children in the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates are only being met in a limited way, with 56.0% of questionnaire respondents stating that their childcare needs are not being met at all. A further 38.9% of respondents

stated that their childcare needs are only being partly met, with existing childcare arrangements either being unsatisfactory and /or of a temporary, uncertain nature. The two main reasons for childcare needs not being met, on the basis of comments expressed in the questionnaires, are the relative absence of crèches, full daycare services, afterschool clubs/groups etc. and the prohibitive cost of the childcare services which are currently available. These outcomes would suggest that there is an urgent need to develop a number of childcare facilities and services in the Blakestown area which would provide a flexible response to the varying childcare needs of local parents and children.

Question 47

What are your particular childcare needs?

Statistical outcomes

In relation to the 293 questionnaire respondents with childcare needs the following represent their particular childcare needs:

Type of childcare		Numbers
Crèches	–	128
Afterschool groups/clubs	–	103
Full Daycare	–	71
Drop In/Sessional	–	64
Playgroups/playschools	–	26
Special needs childcare	–	15
		407

Comments/Analysis

The outcomes from this question would suggest that many families in the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates have a number of different childcare needs. The 293 questionnaire respondents with childcare requirements listed a total of 407 individual childcare needs – this can be accounted for by the fact that many families have two or more children of varying ages who require different types of childcare provision. It is evident that a range of childcare services need to be developed within the Blakestown area for children of different ages (eg. full daycare for pre-school children, afterschool groups/clubs for school going children) and for the circumstances of their parents (eg. parents working outside of the home who require full daycare for their young children and other parents who require part-time sessional childcare).

Question 48

What childcare provision would you like to see developed in the area?

Statistical outcomes

Childcare provision to be developed	Numbers
Crèches	162
Afterschool groups/clubs	130
Full Daycare	70
Drop In/Sessional	62
Playgroups/playschools	62
Special needs childcare	15
Mother and Toddlers groups	14
Others	10
	425

Direct Quotes:

'Childcare provision that would allow single parents to work'

'Maybe a few summer projects for smaller kids'

'Good crèches and after school service'

'Any kind of reasonably priced Montessori etc. – somewhere to leave the children while both parents work'

'All day crèche would enable me to do part-time work'

'More and better equipped play schools'

'My child is slow at reading and her needs are not met'

'All day crèches are needed for full-time workers'

'More pre-school places for 3-4 year olds'

'They have a great one in Blakestown School. Only there wasn't enough places left so my three year old grand-daughter missed out'

'After school for homework'

'More affordable childcare'

'Childcare for special needs kids'

'Mother and toddler groups to allow new people in the area to meet each other'

'Afterschool child minding services'

'Somewhere that would enable you to work even part-time, without costing a fortune'

'Would like affordable crèche for single mothers who want to go back to work'

Comments/Analysis

On the basis of the responses to this question it is estimated that over 350 of the respondents to the questionnaires put forward recommendations and suggestions in relation to the future development of childcare services within the Blakestown area. This figure of 350 is higher than the 295 households who stated that they had personal and direct childcare needs – this outcome would suggest that a majority of people in Blakestown have an interest or concern about the provision of childcare services and that this interest/concern is not only confined to families with young children.

In relation to the particular types of childcare provision which need to be established in Blakestown, it is clear that crèches and afterschool clubs/groups are the two key childcare priorities – they account for 68.7% of the responses to the question concerning the types of childcare which need to be developed within the Blakestown area. It is also important to note that a number of questionnaire respondents felt that an integrated and co-ordinated range of childcare services should be provided within the Blakestown area – services which would enable children and their parents to link into childcare provision from the early stages of childhood right up to adolescence.

13. HOPES / FEARS FOR THE FUTURE

Question 49

What are your hopes for the future of the area?

Statistical outcomes

Hopes for the future	Numbers
For the drugs situation to improve	– 123
That the area will become cleaner, tidier and safer	– 121
Better/stronger community spirit	– 106
That it will become a better place to live	– 91
More activities for children and young people	– 70
Better facilities and services for local residents	– 64
Less excessive drinking	– 62
Fewer gangs/less intimidation	– 53
Increased and more visible garda presence	– 45
Reduction in car stealing/joyriding	– 33
More speed ramps	– 18
Less traffic	– 17
Others	– 38

Direct Quotes:

'Big change in area with regard to drugs problem'

'None – can only see area going down-hill'

'To clean the litter, stop joyriding and remove the gangs on the street corners'

'To make it a nicer place to live'

'People to become more involved in their area'

'I hope we can become the community that we were'

'To make it a drug free zone and make some kids get educated against drugs'

'A lot more community spirit'

'Make sure its maintained and not neglected'

'Like to see it the way it was'

'Repair old boarded up houses as they look awful'

'I just want to move out of this dump'

'Win the Lotto and solve the drugs problem'

'I hope it will be like it was 20 years ago'

'Get rid of scum-bags and drinking on every corner'

'All the robbed cars is getting to be a serious problem – would be great if this could be solved'

'Joyriders and Junkies won't live here anymore'

'I hope the kids stay away from drugs and take every opportunity that comes their way'

'Better deal for young people'

'That the area is tidied up and made safe and I can let my kids out to play'

'Gardaí to be given more money to police the area properly'

'Win the Lotto and get out of here'

'Get a few honest TDs like Joe Higgins'

'That the name of the area won't be frowned upon as is the case now'

'I hope everyone could live as one big community – all looking out for one another'

'More Garda involvement in crime prevention – such as foot patrols'

'That joyriding will be stopped before someone gets killed'

'I fear for my daughter growing up as the generation is changing so quickly. Nobody seems to care about their children and the way they carry on'

'Less vandalism and more parents keeping control of their kids'

'You can enjoy the area when your children are grown up'

'To have a clean peaceful area that we can be proud of'

'That Fingal County Council and Gardaí get the finger out and start looking after this area'

'That something will come out of this questionnaire'

'All my hopes would be that we would live in a better area in the future'

'People will not be afraid to walk around day or night in the area'

'Hope we'll all work together to make Whitestown a better place to live in every sense of the word'

'A peaceful life with long sleep filled nights'

'An area where children and adults can co-exist in peace'

'No hope'

'That the Gardaí will play a bigger part in the community'

'To help young single mothers'

'That it doesn't become a drugs haven'

'That residents will always have the energy to improve the quality of life in Whitestown'

'That the anti-social families will move out and let the rest of the decent people live in peace'

'To see it so improved that we would not be embarrassed to bring visitors to it'

'To develop a community where everyone takes part especially the youth'

'A cleaner more civilised area'

'That crime is reduced and you can walk anywhere safely'

'I hope the estate will become more settled and there will be a stop to over-crowding because the youth cannot afford their own houses and there's not enough Council houses to go around'

'Improvement in the anti-social behaviour of the bold kids in the area'

'Little kids to get more attention instead of roaming the streets on their own'

'That all disruptive families be moved on'

'Safe, nurturing communities which celebrates the diversity of individuals and which provides the supports needed for families'

'I used to have great hopes for this area but I don't anymore'

'That we can go on building a good environment for our children and future grand-children to give them something to live for'

'That the older youth cop on and do something when they see younger ones getting into bad ways'

'Sort out the anti-social behaviour and all the underage drinking'

'As a single parent I'd like to feel safe and I'd like my kids to feel safe and that they can develop and be themselves'

'People to take pride in the area and work together as they did before'

'I want to be able to live the life I wish and to be respected and left alone when I'm walking in and out of my own gate'

Comments/Analysis

The responses to this question clearly demonstrate the desire of local people for the Blakestown area to become a better and safer place to live; and the concerns which many local people have about the future of the area. In more particular terms, there is considerable concern about the current levels of anti-social behaviour within the area and a feeling that the quality of life for local people living in the area has diminished over the last number of years – there are many references in the questionnaires to the ways in which the area used to be a better place to live 5-10 years ago.

The responses would also suggest that the next few years are going to be very important for local communities within the Blakestown area. Whilst a large majority of local people would like to remain living within the area, local residents are also clear about the need to take some corrective action in relation to issues/concerns about anti-

social behaviour, about the lack of facilities and amenities and about the general state of the environment within the Blakestown area. Local people have identified these issues/concerns as key priorities that need to be addressed by relevant statutory agencies, voluntary organisations and community based groups.

Question 50

What are your fears for the future of the area?

Statistical outcomes

That the drugs situation will remain or get worse	–	150
That it will become a no-go area	–	116
That it will get worse	–	74
That the gangs/thugs will take over	–	59
That the joyriding/robbed cars will get worse	–	54
That the alcohol/drink problem will get worse	–	41
Fears about children and young people growing up in the area	–	35
That local residents will give up	–	34
That too many more houses will be built	–	32
That parents will not take care of their children	–	28
That children will be killed by speeding cars	–	21
Others	–	38

Direct Quotes:

'Fear for my kids with the drug problems at present'

'That nothing will be done to improve the area'

'Most people just look after No. 1 and don't care what happens'

'The drug dealers and joyriders will get their teeth into our kids'

'No help for the kids of the area'

'Rising crime and a fear that the place will become a concrete jungle'

'If things get any worse you won't be able to get a taxi to come to your door'

'That drugs will take a greater hold of the area and then get hold of my kids'

'That drugs and weapons will become more available to kids and that more of them will want them'

'Joyriders and Junkies keep increasing'

'Too many young people taking drugs which leads to violence'

'No choices for disabled'

'That the scum of the area go away forever'

'Robbed cars, guns and murders'

'Continued exclusion of those on bottom of the ladder'

'Better facilities for children and parents alike'

'The kids in the area have no respect for anyone with the drugs and drink taking – young teenagers are just getting worse'

'My youngest is a boy and I fear that unless he's a little brat that he won't fit into this area'

'That the good neighbours will move out and the area will never settle'

'That I will always be nervous if out at night in the area'

'Younger children being exposed to illegal drugs'

'That the area will get rundown and nobody will want to come near us'

'That the main problems (i.e. drugs, drink and joyriding) get out of hand'

'The area is just out of control'

'If the place doesn't improve, for the sake of my younger kids, I would love to move'

'That the drink and drugs will never stop'

'That it will just stay the same'

'My fear is that one of my kids will pick up a syringe and end up on drugs'

'That drugs will just take over most of our kids lives'

'That all the people that just don't care are moving into our area'

'Losing out the green belts and becoming a concrete jungle'

'Sleepless nights with cans and bottles littered all around the place'

'That the drink and drugs will get worse and the crime level will get even higher'

'There'll just be a concrete ghetto left with no green space'

'Deaths will occur on our estate roads'

'Drugs will get a firm hold on the young'

'Greater alienation, fear and violence'

'Raising kids and being confident that they can play in peace'

'All the junkies will take over the whole area'

'That it will end up as bad as Ballymun because of Fingal County Council constantly housing young families in the area'

'More housing developments without adequate facilities resulting in teenagers then behaving in an anti-social behaviour'

'I only have one grand-son and I'm afraid he'll get caught up in the drugs racket'

'Culprits becoming younger and younger'
'Something really needs to be done as its terribly unsafe'
'That I will have to live here until I die'
'That the wrong element take over'
'That the anti-social people will stay here and breed more of the same'
'That it will be taken over completely by the drug dealers'
'That it'll get worse and all the nice people will move away'
'Hoping to see a drug free estate'
'That it gets totally rundown and nobody will want to live here'
'I'm afraid the fighting will lead to more stabbings which will lead on to more deaths'

Comments/Analysis

The fears that local people have about the future of the area virtually all relate to issues concerning personal safety/security, anti-social and criminal behaviour, concerns that the estates will become no-go areas and taken over by gangs. On the basis of responses to the questionnaires, it is clear that local people are genuinely worried about what is taking place in the estates at present and fear that, unless some remedial or corrective action is taken, the current situation could become much worse. In relation to the other issues which have been prioritised in the questionnaires (eg. lack of facilities and services for children and young people, the state of the environment and open spaces), it is evident that the issue of law/order and anti-social behaviour is a far more pressing and urgent priority for local people.

In this context there is a critical need to develop strategies which will aim to make the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates safer and more secure places to live – in the absence of these strategies, it is clear that more local people will become more demoralised and despondent about the present/future quality of life for themselves and their families/children; and will not want to remain in the area if the current situation does not improve. In developing strategies to overcome the difficulties which do exist, there is a clear responsibility and onus on relevant statutory agencies (especially An Garda Síochána) to become more active and more assertive in tackling the problems of drug dealing, drug consumption, stolen/speeding cars, joyriding, congregation of intimidating gangs and other anti-social activities which are taking place within the Blakestown area.

Question 51

What do you think needs to happen to make the area a better place to live?

Statistical outcomes

	Numbers
To make the area a better place to live	
Parents to take more control of their children	– 102
Better policing of the area	– 98
A cleaner and tidier environment	– 91
Local people to stand together and to become more involved	– 84
Neighbourhood Watch scheme	– 65
More facilities, services and amenities (especially for young people)	– 61
Drugs free area	– 45
Playground/Play areas	– 36
Evict drug dealers and anti-social tenants	– 28
Stop underage drinking	– 25
More awareness and understanding of drugs	– 22
Speed ramps	– 13
Others	– 43
	713

Direct Quotes:

‘Co-operation of all the people and Government services – all working together’

‘People need to stand together and demand change’

‘That we have a much better police presence in the area’

‘Get the police to clamp down on the dealers and make parents take responsibility for their kid’s actions’

‘Evict all the bad neighbours’

‘Clean it up and put more police on the beat to see what’s going on’

‘Evict the troublemakers and don’t let them back in again’

‘More education on drugs awareness’

‘We need to get more things for kids and youth or else they’ll get totally fucked up’

‘If we had a stock car track the number of joyriders would definitely fall. This is a proven fact due to young lads interest in cars’

‘Lets have a say in what’s going on in the area’

'Get rid of the people giving the area a bad name and have more police patrolling the area'

'Something for the kids to keep them on the right track'

'Teach the youth of the area to appreciate what they have and to be proud of it'

'Put ramps in to stop these joyriders'

'Knock it down like Ballymun and re-build it'

'More sporting opportunities for boys and girls – crack-down on drug taking and dealing and get tough with rowdy families'

'People need to stand up to their kids and show them right from wrong'

'Slow everyone down and show them what is going on in the area'

'Curfew for up to 15 year olds'

'There needs to be more police on the streets'

'Parents need to stop turning a blind eye to their kid's activities'

'Stop the increase of drugs in the area'

'Fuck all them Junkies and Drug Pushers out on the street where they belong'

'Everybody to pull together'

'People need to make a stand and have their voices heard'

'Arrest drunks and junkies and have a speed limit for Whitestown'

'To educate our own families at an early age about crime, drugs etc.'

'Open your eyes'

'People to unite and do things to keep the area safe and clean and to each take care of their own kids'

'That the Gardaí will play an enhanced role to prevent crime and delinquency'

'More Gardaí crackdown on dealers and young hooligans that destroy the estate'

'A co-ordinated and partnership approach to community development in the area'

'Get Sinn Fein to have a quiet word with a few families'

'A good hospital for children and adults'

'Certain residents need to have more control over their kids'

'More police presence might help wipe out the drugs'

'Block off more dangerous places in the area'

'Stop gangs from hanging around on the walls drinking'

'Fingal County Council acting for a change, rather than sitting back pen pushing'

'Encourage kids to enjoy school and do their best to stay there'

'Continued partnership between state, voluntary and community agencies'

'Local peoples' needs have to be met – not some outsiders ideas as to what they think we need'

'Youths who are caught at underage drinking should be made go to Alcoholics Anonymous'

'Drug pushers and addicts all out'

'Teach the very young to respect property and to keep their area tidy and clean'

'More involvement of residents in development of the area'

'People to show scumbag youths that they're not going to ruin our area anymore'

'Hope it doesn't get too overcrowded with all the buildings going on'

'The rowdy youths should be stopped and punished properly so they won't turn the place into a total dive'

'Gardaí to get more involved and not look on everyone as scum because of where we live'

'Get everybody united and working together to solve our problems'

'The houses should be allocated to the youth who actually live in the area'

'All residents should get together to take pride in their area'

'People should be vetted before being given the homes'

'Fingal County Council to work more with the police and evict the known druggies – that would be a step in the right direction'

'Lets get together and do something before its too late'

'We need an annual festival to bring us back to community again. We are all stuck in our own boxes'

'Get the bad people out for the sake of the good people'

'We need to give the residents a say in the decisions made for the area'

'Allocate vacant houses to people in the area so they don't look like an eyesore'

'People have to take responsibility for the behaviour of their kids'

'Sort out these bloody drug-pushers once and for all'

Comments/Analysis

There is a clear recognition amongst a large number of respondents to the questionnaire of the need for local residents living in the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates to play a more active role in the communities in which they live. In response to the question 'what needs to happen to make your area a better place to live?' it is both positive and encouraging that 281 (35.2%) of the responses related to the role and responsibilities of local residents i.e. 'Local people to stand together', 'Parents to take more control of their children', 'Neighbourhood Watch scheme'. Therefore, whilst local

residents recognize the need for relevant statutory agencies to do their work in a more effective manner and to deliver better quality services to the Blakestown area, they also recognize the need for local residents to become more involved in strategies aimed at rejuvenating the Blakestown area.

Apart from the role of local communities and local residents the other main outcome from this question relates to the need to tackle problems concerning anti-social and criminal behaviour within the Sheepmoor and Whitestown estates. This type of behaviour has led to a certain level of instability, insecurity and fear amongst local residents and a large number of questionnaire respondents felt that the most urgent priority for the Blakestown area is to tackle and overcome problems relating to drug abuse, gangs of young people milling around the area in an intimidating manner, car stealing/joyriding, vandalism etc. A total of 320 (44.9%) responses to the question about what needs to happen to make Blakestown a better place to live related to possible solutions to these problems eg. 'Better policing of the area', 'Parents to take more control of their children', 'Evict drug dealers and anti-social tenants', 'Stop underage drinking'.