

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND

The RAPID (Re-vitalising Areas through Planning, Investment and Development) programme is a government initiative which is operational in 45 areas within the Republic of Ireland – 25 of these areas are within urban locations (Strand 1) and 20 are within medium sized towns (Strand 2). The main aims of the RAPID programme are to fast-track or frontload money from the National Development Plan into the designated RAPID areas; and to improve the co-ordination and delivery of public/State services to local residents living within the designated RAPID areas.

A number of housing estates and neighbourhoods within the Blanchardstown area are currently participating in the RAPID programme – these are Mulhuddart, Corduff; the Fortlawn and Whitechapel estates in Mountview; and the Whitestown and Sheepmoor estates in Blakestown. These areas were selected on account of the levels of socio-economic disadvantage being experienced by many people living within these areas – the RAPID programme has a clear and explicit role in tackling disadvantage and social exclusion and improving the quality of life for local residents within the designated RAPID areas.

1.2. NEED ANALYSIS SURVEYS

In each of the 45 RAPID areas (including Blanchardstown) which are participating in the national RAPID programme, an Area Implementation Team (AIT) has been established. These AITs, which comprise a combination of statutory and community representatives, are responsible for drawing up RAPID Action Plans for their RAPID areas, for guiding and directing the development of RAPID within these areas and for supporting the work of the RAPID Co-ordinators (there is one RAPID Co-ordinator in each of the 45 RAPID areas).

The Blanchardstown RAPID AIT has clearly identified the need to collect baseline information about each of the four designated RAPID neighbourhoods within the Blanchardstown area i.e. Mulhuddart, Corduff, Fortlawn and Whitechapel, Whitestown and Sheepmoor. In addition to gathering statistical information which already exists (in relation to issues like unemployment, educational disadvantage, social exclusion etc) the Blanchardstown AIT also felt that it was important to link directly into the views, opinions, hopes and concerns of local residents living within the designated RAPID areas in Blanchardstown. As a means of achieving this aim, the Blanchardstown AIT supported the compilation and production of Needs Analysis Surveys which have taken place in each of the four designated areas. This support has included the provision of financial assistance and significant contributions from the RAPID Co-ordinator for the Blanchardstown area (Niall Behan).

The Needs Analysis Surveys have involved the employment of Research Co-ordinators in each of the four designated areas in Blanchardstown: 80:20 (Educating and Acting for a Better World) co-ordinated the Needs Analysis Survey in Corduff whilst Stephen Rourke co-ordinated the Needs Analysis Surveys in Mulhuddart, in Fortlawn/Whitechapel and in Whitestown/Sheepmoor. In each of these areas a local Needs Analysis Group was set up – these groups provided guidance and advice on a number of different aspects of the Needs Analysis Surveys. Finally, in each of the four designated locations a team of local researchers were taken on to try and ensure that as many local households as possible participated in the Needs Analysis Surveys (through the completion of detailed questionnaires which were drawn up by the local Needs Analysis Groups in each of the four areas)

The response rates from the four Needs Analysis Surveys are as follows:

Area	Year of Research	Number of households	Number of completed questionnaires	Percentage of questionnaires completed
Mulhuddart	2001	540 ¹	478	88.5%
Corduff	2002	1,263	605 ²	47.9%
Fortlawn/ Whitechapel	2002	450	351	78.0%
Whitestown/ Sheepmoor	2002	686	588	85.7%
Totals		2,939	2,022	68.8%

Therefore a total of 2,022 (68.8%) of households participated in the Needs Analysis Surveys which took place in the designated RAPID areas within Blanchardstown. It is considered that this outcome is both impressive and encouraging and clearly indicates that local residents have a real interest in the ongoing development of their areas. Furthermore, it is considered that the results which emerged from the Needs Analysis Survey (representing the views, opinions, ideas and suggestions of over 2,000 local households) should be of significant interest to Government Departments, statutory agencies, voluntary organisations and community based groups which are involved in delivering services to local residents in the designated RAPID areas within Blanchardstown.

¹ The Mulhuddart Needs Analysis Survey took place in the Dromheath, Parslickstown and Wellview estates

² The Corduff Needs Analysis Survey involved representative sampling of the Corduff area. The main focus was on ensuring that the research outcomes were representative of the overall area - therefore, not every household was surveyed

1.3 DELIVERY OF PUBLIC/COMMUNITY SERVICES

The purpose of this document is to draw together those aspects of the Needs Analysis Surveys which relate to the delivery of public/State and community services in the RAPID areas within Blanchardstown. A number of questions contained within the questionnaires which were completed by local households refer either directly or indirectly to the delivery of services by various agencies and organisations. In relation to direct questions, local households were asked about their opinions of the services provided by a number of named organisations (e.g. Fingal County Council, Northern Area Health Board, An Garda Siochana, Department of Social and Family Affairs, Dublin Bus, An Post, FAS, local schools). In relation to indirect questions concerning various aspects of living within their own areas (e.g. best things about living in the area, worst things about living in the area, things that need to happen to make the area a better place in which to live) questionnaire respondents also made a significant number of references to the quality of services provided by a wide range of agencies and organisations. This document aims to draw together the responses from the direct questions and the indirect questions concerning delivery of services within the designated areas.

It is considered that this type of analysis will be a valuable and useful resource for relevant Government Departments, statutory agencies and other organisations. The responses from over 2,000 households provides a clear indication of the levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the services currently being provided. In addition, the outcomes from the completed questionnaires serve to highlight areas in which improvements might be made and contain a large number of recommendations about ways in which the quality and nature of service provision/delivery might be enhanced over the next period of time. In this context, it is considered that this document will contribute directly to one of the main objectives of the RAPID programme i.e. to improve the co-ordination and delivery of public/State services within the RAPID areas.

1.4 STRUCTURE OF DOCUMENT

Following this introduction, the next section of the document (Section 2) will detail the views, opinions and comments expressed by the questionnaire respondents in relation to the services provided by a number of individual agencies and organisations. These agencies and organisations are: Fingal County Council; Northern Area Health Board; An Garda Síochána; FAS; Department of Social and Family Affairs; Dublin Bus; An Post; County Dublin Vocational Education Committee; local schools; and local drugs services/projects. The final section of the document (Section 3) will consider a number of more general overarching comments and conclusions in relation to the delivery of services within the designated RAPID areas in Blanchardstown – comments and conclusions which are based on the views and opinions of the 2,022 households which participated in the four Needs Analysis Surveys.

2. VIEWS AND OPINIONS ABOUT SERVICES PROVIDED BY DIFFERENT AGENCIES AND ORGANISATIONS

2.1. FINGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

(i) Statistical Outcomes

Services provided by Fingal County Council

	Mulhuddart	Fortlawn/ Whitechapel	Whitestown/ Sheepmoor	Total
Very Good	3 (0.6%)	5 (1.4%)	28 (4.8%)	36 (2.6%)
Good	51 (10.7%)	37 (10.5%)	99 (16.8%)	187 (13.2%)
Alright	199 (24.9%)	116 (33.0%)	242 (41.2%)	477 (33.7%)
Poor	195 (40.8%)	99 (28.2%)	120 (20.4%)	414 (29.2%)
Very Poor	110 (23.0%)	81 (23.2%)	98 (16.7%)	289 (20.4%)
No Comment/ Don't Know	-	13 (3.7%)	1 (0.1%)	14 (0.9%)
Total	478 (100%)	351 (100%)	588 (100%)	1,417 (100%)

What do you think about the state of the environment in your area?

	Mulhuddart	Fortlawn/ Whitechapel	Whitestown/ Sheepmoor	Totals
Good	6 (1.3%)	17 (4.9%)	30 (5.1%)	53 (3.7%)
Alright	48 (10.0%)	173 (49.3%)	268 (45.6%)	489 (34.5%)
Poor	197 (41.2%)	94 (26.8%)	192 (32.6%)	483 (34.1%)
Very Poor	227 (47.5%)	67 (19.0%)	98 (16.7%)	392 (27.7%)
Total	478 (100%)	351 (100%)	588 (100%)	1,417 (100%)

In relation to the Corduff Needs Analysis Survey, the following outcomes are of particular relevance to the services provided by Fingal County Council:

Usage and satisfaction level with services and facilities in Blanchardstown

	Used and does not say it satisfied	Used and satisfied	Used and not satisfied	Not used
Fingal County Council Customer Services	2.7%	22.5%	20.4%	54.4%

Satisfaction rating for those who have used services and facilities in Blanchardstown

	Used and does not say it satisfied	Used and satisfied	Used and not satisfied
Fingal County Council Customer Services	5.9%	49.4%	44.7%

(ii) Analysis of Outcomes and Comments

- ❖ There are varying levels of satisfaction with the services provided by Fingal County Council with 38.2% of households in Mulhuddart, Fortlawn/Whitechapel and Whitestown/Sheepmoor feeling that Fingal County Council is providing a good or alright service and 61.8% of local households feeling that the quality of services are either poor or very poor. This pattern is mirrored in Corduff, with a division of opinions between people who feel that Fingal County Council is providing a satisfactory service and people who are dissatisfied with the services provided by the County Council.
- ❖ Positive references were made in the Needs Analysis Surveys to the following aspects of the work of Fingal County Council
 - The quality of the houses in which people live. Local residents are generally satisfied with their houses – they are sturdy/solid, well built and spacious. In

Mulhuddart, 77.8% of local households said that their houses are very good, good or alright. This type of outcome, which is also reflected across the other RAPID neighbourhoods in Blanchardstown, would indicate a fairly high satisfaction rating in relation to the housing stock within the area

- Some of the recent upgrading and refurbishment work which has taken place within a number of local authority estates within the Blanchardstown area. This remedial work has been recognised and welcomed by local residents

❖ Critical references were made in the Needs Analysis Surveys to the following aspects of Fingal County Council's work:

- The upkeep and maintenance of the physical environment and open spaces within the Blanchardstown area. There is a significant level of dissatisfaction with the current state of the environment, with 61.8% of local households in the Mulhuddart, Fortlawn/Whitechapel and Whitestown/Sheepmoor areas feeling that the environment is in a poor or very poor state. Most local residents feel that there is a significant role and responsibility for Fingal County Council to improve the state and condition of the local environment – in response to the question ‘How do you think that the environment might be improved in your area?’, 480 (33.8%) of the respondents to the surveys referred to the need for Fingal County Council to provide an improved and more regular clean up service for green spaces and other open areas within the Blanchardstown area (through the provision of more litter bins and skips; the organisation of clean-up days and events; better street cleaning service)
- The relative absence of play areas and play facilities within the Blanchardstown area. The development of play facilities is seen to be the key responsibility of Fingal County Council and was identified as a key need by a very large number of the local households who participated in the Needs Analysis Surveys – in response to questions concerning ‘What are the things that the area needs most?’ and ‘How should the open spaces be developed?’ there was overwhelming support for the construction of play areas and play facilities. In Mulhuddart, Fortlawn/Whitechapel and Whitestown/Sheepmoor 1,212 (85.5%) of the local households felt that playgrounds and play areas

were the most important single priority in relation to the development of the green/open spaces within the RAPID areas in Blanchardstown.

2.2. NORTHERN AREA HEALTH BOARD

(i) Statistical Outcomes

Services provided by Northern Area Health Board

	Mulhuddart	Fortlawn/ Whitechapel	Whitechapel/ Sheepmoor	Totals
Very Good	10 (2.1%)	7 (2.0%)	62 (10.5%)	79 (5.6%)
Good	65 (13.6%)	73 (20.8%)	164 (27.9%)	302 (21.3%)
Alright	159 (33.3%)	152 (43.3%)	168 (28.6%)	479 (33.8%)
Poor	160 (33.5%)	49 (14.0%)	108 (18.4%)	317 (22.4%)
Very Poor	69 (14.4%)	25 (7.1%)	37 (6.3%)	131 (9.2%)
No Comment/ Don't Know	15 (3.1%)	45 (12.8%)	49 (8.3%)	109 (7.7%)
Totals	478 (100%)	351 (100%)	588 (100%)	1,417 (100%)

In relation to the Corduff Needs Analysis Survey, the following outcomes are of particular relevance to the services provided by the Northern Area Health Board:

Usage and satisfaction level with services and facilities in Blanchardstown

	Used and does not say if satisfied	Used and satisfied	Used and not satisfied	Not used
James Connolly Memorial Hospital	7.2%	50.3%	31.2%	11.3%
Doctors/G.P.s	7.2%	63.6%	8.1%	21.1%
Community Welfare Officers	1.8%	12.4%	9.4%	76.4%
Family Support	0.9%	4.4%	2.3%	92.4%
Social Workers	1.1%	3.5%	3.3%	92.1%

Satisfaction rating for those who have used services and facilities in Blanchardstown

	Used and does not say if satisfied	Used and satisfied	Used and not satisfied
James Connolly Memorial Hospital	8.1%	56.7%	35.2%
Doctors/G.P.s	9.2%	80.5%	10.3%
Community Welfare Officers	7.5%	52.6%	39.9%
Family Support	11.7%	58.1%	30.2%
Social Workers	13.3%	44.4%	42.3%

(ii) Analysis of Outcomes and Comments

- ❖ There is a reasonable level of satisfaction with services being provided by the Northern Area Health Board to local residents living within the RAPID areas in Blanchardstown. In the Mulhuddart, Fortlawn/Whitechapel and Whitestown/Sheepmoor areas, a total of 59.7% of local households felt that the Health Board was providing a very good, good or alright service whilst people living in Corduff were generally satisfied with the services being provided by the James Connolly Memorial Hospital and by local doctors. In relation to satisfaction ratings it is evident that there is a direct relationship between levels of satisfaction and geographical proximity to healthcare services (e.g. Health Centres, doctors surgeries) – in Mulhuddart, where there are limited healthcare services, dissatisfaction rates are fairly high whilst in other areas, with local Health Centres, dissatisfaction rates are relatively low
- ❖ Positive references were made in the Needs Analysis Surveys to the following aspects of healthcare and medical services:
 - The commitment and interest of healthcare workers who are working within the designated RAPID areas. In addition to the high satisfaction rates for doctors/GPs (detailed earlier), it is also evident that local residents are very appreciative of the contributions being made by Public Health Nurses and other healthcare professionals. It is recognised that the resources and supports available to healthcare workers in disadvantaged areas are often much less than the resources within more affluent areas e.g. specialist staff resources, suitable premises, equipment etc. In this context, people living in the RAPID areas in Blanchardstown acknowledge the work of healthcare professionals and, through the Needs Analysis Surveys, respondents have clearly stated their appreciation for the contributions being made by doctors/GPs, Public Health Nurses and other healthcare workers.
 - There is a certain degree of hope and optimism that the healthcare services in the RAPID areas will be significantly improved over the next period of time. In more particular terms, it is considered that the re-development of James

Connolly Memorial Hospital and the proposed construction of new Primary Healthcare Centres (possibly in Hartstown/Huntstown and Mulhuddart) will make a positive contribution to the healthcare infrastructure within the ever expanding Blanchardstown area. It is anticipated that the proposed Primary Healthcare Centres will provide a broader and more accessible range of healthcare services for local residents and will result in local people being able to link into these services in locations which are situated close to where they live (rather than having to travel significant distances to ensure that their healthcare needs are being met in an effective and professional manner)

❖ Critical references were made in the Needs Analysis Surveys to the following aspects of healthcare and medical services:

- A large number of respondents to the surveys referred to the lack of a Children's Hospital or a paediatric unit within the Blanchardstown area. On account of the young age profile of the population of Blanchardstown, it is considered imperative that there should be a specialist health/medical unit for children and young people within the local Blanchardstown area. At present, children who are ill and/or who have been involved in an accident have to travel to Temple Street Hospital or the paediatric ward of other hospitals in the Greater Dublin area. At this stage in its development, and with the population predicted to increase significantly over the next five year period, there is a strong view that Blanchardstown should have its own paediatric unit/ward (which might be attached to the James Connolly Memorial Hospital)
- There is a need to consider the capacity of local households in the RAPID areas within Blanchardstown to afford the costs involved in meeting healthcare requirements. On the basis of the completed questionnaires, it is evident that many parents are prepared to sacrifice their own healthcare needs in order to ensure that the healthcare needs of children can be met. Whilst recognising that it is the responsibility of relevant Government Departments and statutory agencies to provide universal healthcare provision within areas like Blanchardstown, it is also important that access to local healthcare

services can be as accessible and affordable as possible (with local residents within the RAPID areas not feeling constrained from going to the doctor on account of inability to pay).

2.3. AN GARDA SIOCHANA

(i) Statistical Outcomes

Services provided by An Garda Síochána

	Mulhuddart	Fortlawn/ Whitechapel	Whitestown/ Sheepmoor	Totals
Very Good	7 (1.5%)	4 (1.1%)	26 (4.4%)	37 (2.6%)
Good	32 (6.7%)	30 (8.6%)	98 (16.7%)	160 (11.3%)
Alright	88 (18.4%)	113 (32.2%)	218 (37.1%)	419 (29.6%)
Poor	180 (37.6%)	117 (33.3%)	158 (26.9%)	455 (32.1%)
Very Poor	171 (35.8%)	50 (14.2%)	82 (13.9%)	303 (21.4%)
No Comment/ Don't Know	- (0.0%)	37 (10.6%)	6 (1.0%)	43 (3.0%)
Total	478 (100%)	351 (100%)	588 (100%)	1,417 (100%)

In relation to the Corduff Needs Analysis Survey, the following outcomes are of particular relevance to the services provided by An Garda Síochána:

Usage and satisfaction level with services and facilities in Blanchardstown

	Used and does not say if satisfied	Used and satisfied	Used and not satisfied	Not used
An Garda Síochána	5.1%	39.8%	28.5%	26.6%

Satisfaction rating for those who have used services and facilities in Blanchardstown

	Used and does not say if satisfied	Used and satisfied	Used and not satisfied
An Garda Siochana	7.0%	54.2%	38.8%

(ii) Analysis of Outcomes and Comments

- ❖ There are varying degrees of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the performance of An Garda Siochana in the designated RAPID areas within Blanchardstown. In relation to the Mulhuddart, Fortlawn/Whitechapel and Whitestown/Sheepmoor areas, it is estimated about 43% of local residents feel that An Garda Siochana are providing a very good, good or alright service whilst approximately 54% of residents in Corduff who have used An Garda Siochana feel that the gardaí are providing a satisfactory service. On the basis of An Garda Siochana being the primary law enforcement authority within the State and the ways in which local residents have identified issues relating to anti-social and criminal behaviour as being the most serious issues within the RAPID areas, it is evident that there is a particularly important role for An Garda Siochana to play in the ongoing development of local communities within the designated RAPID areas
- ❖ Positive references were made in the Needs Analysis Surveys to the following aspects of the work of An Garda Siochana:
 - An Garda Siochana, together with the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and local community groups, have been involved in supporting the development of youth projects in the Blanchardstown area (through initiatives like the Youth Diversion Programme which funds the WEB project). The participation and involvement of the gardaí in youth projects and youth activities helps to create a positive image of An Garda Siochana and to improve relationships between the gardaí and the young people who are participating in the youth projects in which An Garda Siochana is involved.

The existence of the youth projects being funded through initiatives like the Youth Diversion Programme also provide young people with positive and constructive alternatives to anti-social and criminal behaviour

- There were positive comments about the ways in which the gardaí patrol public spaces within the Blanchardstown area and about some of the services being provided through the Garda Stations in the Blanchardstown area. These comments related especially to the work and activities of the gardaí during daytime hours – there were other more critical comments about the lack of garda visibility and presence at evening/night-times and during the weekends. When they are patrolling and when they are visible, it is considered that the presence of the gardaí acts as a significant deterrent to people getting involved in anti-social and criminal activities.
- ❖ Critical references and comments were made in the Needs Analysis Surveys to the following aspects of the work of An Garda Síochána:
 - There is a considerable level of dissatisfaction with the ways in which the gardaí are responding to the anti-social and criminal activities which seem to be taking place within Blanchardstown on a regular basis. All four of the Needs Analysis Surveys clearly identified issues relating to safety and security as the most significant concerns/worries which local people have about living within their own area. In addition to the incidences of drug taking, stolen cars being driven at speed, teenage drinking, vandalism and gangs milling around in an intimidating manner, local residents are equally concerned about the perceived ineffective and minimal responses by An Garda Síochána – there is a strong sense that the gardaí do not have a sufficient presence within local estates to tackle problems concerning anti-social and criminal behaviour; and that the garda are very slow to respond to requests for help and assistance
 - There are also concerns about the attitude of some gardaí to young people who live within the Blanchardstown area. All four of the Needs Analysis Surveys included comments about the perceived attitude of some gardaí to local residents and about the need for the image/profile of An Garda Síochána to be improved (especially amongst the young) within the Blanchardstown

area. As the main custodians of law and order An Garda Siochana should be trusted and respected by citizens. There is concern that there are fairly low levels of respect for An Garda Siochana (for its effectiveness and efficiency in tackling crime and anti-social behaviour, for the attitude of some gardaí to young people living in local estates) within certain parts of the Blanchardstown area. A key challenge for An Garda Siochana is to develop and build up the relationships between the gardaí and local residents within the Blanchardstown area (with local residents having more confidence in, and respect for, the efficiency and attitude of An Garda Siochana).

2.4. FAS

(i) Statistical Outcomes

Services provided by FÁS

	Mulhuddart	Fortlawn/ Whitechapel	Whitestown/ Sheepmoor	Totals
Very Good	63 (13.2%)	18 (5.1%)	38 (6.5%)	119 (8.4%)
Good	153 (32.0%)	105 (29.9%)	149 (25.3%)	407 (28.7%)
Alright	133 (27.8%)	120 (34.2%)	167 (28.4%)	420 (29.6%)
Poor	35 (7.3%)	24 (6.8%)	56 (9.5%)	115 (8.1%)
Very Poor	9 (1.9%)	15 (4.3%)	16 (2.7%)	40 (2.8%)
No Comment/ Don't Know	85 (17.8%)	69 (19.7%)	162 (27.6%)	316 (22.4%)
Totals	478 (100%)	351 (100%)	588 (100%)	1,417 (100%)

In relation to the Corduff Needs Analysis Survey the following outcomes are of particular relevance to the services provided by FAS:

Usage and satisfaction level with services and facilities in Blanchardstown

	Used and does not say if satisfied	Used and satisfied	Used and not satisfied	Not used
FAS	3.7%	26.2%	4.0%	66.1%

Satisfaction rating for those who have used services and facilities in Blanchardstown

	Used and does not say if satisfied	Used and satisfied	Used and not satisfied
FAS	10.9%	77.2%	11.9%

(ii) Analysis of Outcomes and Comments

- ❖ There is a fairly high level of satisfaction with the quality of services provided by FAS to local residents living in the designated RAPID areas within Blanchardstown. A total of 66.7% of survey respondents in Mulhuddart, Fortlawn/Whitechapel and Whitestown/Sheepmoor feel that FAS is providing a very good, good or alright service – this figure rises to 85.9% when the No comments/Don't knows are excluded. The satisfaction rating is also at a high level within Corduff - of those people who have used services provided/funded by FAS, 77.2% have been satisfied with the delivery of these services
- ❖ Positive references were made in the Needs Analysis Surveys to the following aspects of the work of FAS:
 - The Community Employment and Jobs Initiative programmes have been of significant benefit to local communities within the Blanchardstown area. On the basis of comments made in the Needs Analysis Surveys it is apparent that individual Community Employment and Jobs Initiative participants benefited through increasing their confidence, skills and knowledge (thereby making them more employable); and local community groups and organisations benefited through being able to employ people (on Community Employment and Jobs Initiative) to deliver a range of different community services. There is considerable concern about the recent cutbacks in temporary employment programmes (like Community Employment and Jobs Initiative) and the impact which these cutbacks will have upon the employment prospects of local unemployed people and the capacity of local community groups to provide services within their own areas

- There were a number of positive references in the Needs Analysis Surveys to the ways in which FAS has assisted young people in the RAPID areas to access training and employment. It is considered that FAS has played a particularly important role in relation to the services which it has provided to young people and especially to young people who might otherwise have experienced difficulties in securing employment or places on training programmes (e.g. unqualified early school leavers). A number of survey respondents felt that FAS staff and the staff employed by the Local Employment Service have demonstrated a real interest and commitment in helping young people to work through training and employment options; and in enabling these young people to secure appropriate training and employment positions
- ❖ Critical references and comments were made in the Needs Analysis Surveys to the following aspects of the work of FAS:
- FAS needs to promote and market its activities and services more widely within the designated RAPID areas in Blanchardstown. A significant number of survey respondents in Mulhuddart, Fortlawn/Whitechapel and Whitestown/Sheepmoor (i.e. 316 - 22.4%) were unable to offer any comment about the work and activities of FAS – many of these 316 people stated that they had never heard of FAS. This type of outcome is also reflected in the Corduff Needs Analysis Survey, with a significant number of local people in Corduff being unaware of the services being provided by FAS. There is a clear need for FAS to promote its activities at a more local level within various housing estates and neighbourhoods in the Blanchardstown area
 - Many of the local residents who participated in the Needs Analysis Surveys referred to the absence of a FAS Training Centre and a FAS Community Training Workshop within the Blanchardstown area. It is considered that the current population of Blanchardstown and the Dublin 15 area (72,000 in the 2002 Census) would justify the siting of a Training Centre and a Community Training Workshop in the Blanchardstown area. On the basis of comments contained in the Needs Analysis Surveys it is apparent that the geographical

inaccessibility of the existing Training Centres and Community Training Workshops (in places like Finglas, Cabra and Ballyfermot) is a significant disincentive to local people who are interested in participating in training programmes and training courses

2.5. DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND FAMILY AFFAIRS

(i) Statistical Outcomes

Services provided by Department of Social and Family Affairs³

	Fortlawn/ Whitechapel	Whitestown/ Sheepmoor	Total
Very Good	10 (2.9%)	24 (4.1%)	34 (3.6%)
Good	60 (17.1%)	157 (26.7%)	217 (23.1%)
Alright	97 (27.6%)	234 (39.8%)	331 (35.3%)
Poor	31 (8.8%)	81 (13.8%)	112 (11.9%)
Very Poor	40 (11.4%)	41 (7.0%)	81 (8.6%)
No Comment/ Don't Know	113 (32.2%)	51 (8.6%)	164 (17.5%)
Totals	351 (100%)	588 (100%)	939 (100%)

In relation to the Corduff Needs Analysis Survey the following outcomes are of particular relevance to the services provided by the Department of Social and Family Affairs:

Usage and satisfaction level with services and facilities in Blanchardstown

	Used and does not say if satisfied	Used and satisfied	Used and not satisfied	Not used
Social Welfare Services	2.7%	18.5%	6.6%	72.2%

³ The Needs Analysis Survey in Mulhuddart did not include questions about the services provided by the Department of Social and Family Affairs

Satisfaction rating for those who have used services and facilities in Blanchardstown

	Used and does not say if satisfied	Used and satisfied	Used and not satisfied
Social Welfare Services	9.6%	66.7%	23.7%

(ii) Analysis of Outcomes and Comments

- ❖ There is a fairly high level of satisfaction with the services provided by the Department of Social and Family Affairs – 62% of the survey respondents in Fortlawn/Whitechapel and Whitestown/Sheepmoor felt that this Department was providing a very good, good or alright service whilst 66.7% of the survey respondents in Corduff who had used its services felt that the Department of Social and Family Affairs was providing a satisfactory service. The outcomes from the Needs Analysis Surveys would also suggest that the number of local residents who are directly in contact with the Department of Social and Family Affairs has declined significantly over the course of the last 10 years period (primarily as a result of the substantial decrease in the number of people in receipt of unemployment assistance and unemployment benefit) – in Corduff, for example, 72.5% of the survey respondents stated that they do not use the services and supports provided by the Department of Social and Family Affairs
- ❖ Positive references were made in the Needs Analysis Surveys to the following aspects of the work of the Department of Social and Family Affairs:
 - There is a recognition of the improvements which have taken place in the ways in which the Department of Social and Family Affairs delivers its services within the Blanchardstown area. A large number of survey respondents referred to the fact that this Department has become more user friendly and more accessible and deals with its clients in a more courteous and respectful manner. Local residents also felt that staff within this Department were able to give more time to individual clients and to help clients work through various options and opportunities. A number of local residents also

referred to the way in which the profile and image of the Department of Social and Family Affairs had improved as a result of the re-location of a number of the services provided by this Department to Westend Office Park.

- ❖ Critical references were made in the Needs Analysis Surveys to the following aspects of the work of the Department of Social and Family Affairs:
 - Many local residents feel that they are not fully aware of the range of services and supports which are available through the Department of Social and Family Affairs. Whilst it is recognised that this Department has made improvements in relation to the provision of information in recent years (e.g. through the production of easy to read leaflets and brochures), there is still a sense that the Department of Social and Family Affairs should be organising more localised information events and information sessions within local communities in the Blanchardstown area. There were a number of suggestions in the completed questionnaires to the idea of organising social welfare clinics within local community centres and resource centres (perhaps on a weekly or fortnightly basis). These information and advice clinics could be organised in conjunction with the Citizens Information Centre in Blanchardstown.

2.6. DUBLIN BUS

(i) Statistical Outcomes

Services provided by Dublin Bus

	Mulhuddart	Fortlawn/ Whitechapel	Whitestown/ Sheepmoor	Totals
Very Good	5 (1.1%)	8 (2.3%)	42 (7.1%)	55 (3.9%)
Good	45 (9.4%)	47 (13.4%)	181 (30.8%)	273 (19.3%)
Alright	56 (11.7%)	122 (34.8%)	225 (38.3%)	403 (28.4%)
Poor	196 (41.0%)	47 (13.4%)	101 (17.2%)	344 (24.3%)
Very Poor	166 (34.7%)	46 (13.1%)	33 (5.6%)	245 (17.3%)
No Comment/ Don't Know	10 (2.1%)	81 (23.0%)	6 (1.0%)	97 (6.8%)
Totals	478 (100%)	351 (100%)	588 (100%)	1,417 (100%)

In relation to the Corduff Needs Analysis Survey the following outcomes are of particular relevance to the services provided by Dublin Bus:

Usage and satisfaction level with services and facilities in Blanchardstown

	Used and does not say if satisfied	Used and satisfied	Used and not satisfied	Not used
Dublin Bus	4.9%	22.0%	54.7%	18.4%

Satisfaction rating for those who have used service and facilities in Blanchardstown

	Used and does not say if satisfied	Used and satisfied	Used and not satisfied
Dublin Bus	6.0%	27.0%	67.0%

(ii) Analysis of Outcomes and Comments

- ❖ There is a high level of dissatisfaction with the quality and quantity of services provided by Dublin Bus to local residents living within the RAPID areas in Blanchardstown. A total of 41.6% of survey respondents in the Mulhuddart, Fortlawn/Whitechapel and Whitestown/Sheepmoor areas felt that Dublin Bus was providing either a poor or very poor service. In Corduff, a total of 67% of survey respondents who use Dublin Bus felt the services provided by Dublin Bus were unsatisfactory. On account of the relatively high levels of dependence on public transport within areas like Mulhuddart and Corduff (where there are low rates of car ownership and where people have to travel some distance to access a number of important services e.g. hospital services, shopping facilities), it is a disappointment and a cause of some concern that there is a significant level of dissatisfaction with the services provided by Dublin Bus

- ❖ Positive reference were made in the Needs Analysis Surveys to the following aspects of the work of Dublin Bus:
 - There have been noticeable improvements in recent years in the quality and regularity of the main bus route into Dublin City (i.e. the No.39 route). A number of survey respondents commented upon the fact that the No.39 service is now more regular (with more buses on the route) and that the Blanchardstown Quality Bus Corridor has led to a reduction in the time that it takes to travel into Dublin City by bus. Positive comments were also made about the fleet of buses on the No. 39 bus route – they are newer and better maintained/cleaned than the buses which were previously used on the No.39 route

- ❖ Critical references were made in the Needs Analysis Surveys to the following aspects of the work of Dublin Bus:
 - Many of the survey respondents referred to the need for Dublin Bus to consider introducing new bus routes into the Blanchardstown area and to revise/improve the routes for the existing services. In relation to new routes, there is a clear need for more internal public transport within the Blanchardstown area, public transport which would serve to provide linkages between the various communities within Blanchardstown – on account of the ever increasing size of Blanchardstown (which is now a large town in an Irish context), it is considered imperative that Dublin Bus introduce new bus routes into Blanchardstown (perhaps through the use of small Nipper/Imp buses). In relation to the existing bus routes there is a high level of annoyance and frustration that the main bus routes have to go through the Castleknock area rather than going directly into the City Centre of Dublin and there is a clear view that there should be more direct bus routes into Dublin City
 - Dublin Bus needs to ensure that it keeps to its scheduled timetables for bus services which are used by local people who live in the Blanchardstown area. There were a number of complaints in the survey questionnaires about the unreliability and infrequency of buses which service the bus routes in Blanchardstown. Whilst there is a recognition of the fact that there are now

more buses servicing the Blanchardstown bus routes there is also a view that these buses often do not run on time and that there are unexplained gaps in the scheduled timetable (with buses not arriving when they are supposed to) – this causes significant problems for local people who have to be in a particular place at a particular time e.g. hospital/medical appointments, people going to work, young people going to school/college

2.7. AN POST

(i) Statistical Outcomes

Services provided by An Post

	Mulhuddart	Fortlawn/ Whitechapel	Whitestown/ Sheepmoor	Totals
Very Good	41 (8.6%)	22 (6.3%)	109 (18.5%)	172 (12.1%)
Good	139 (29.1%)	108 (30.8%)	271 (46.1%)	518 (36.6%)
Alright	164 (34.3%)	132 (37.6%)	171 (29.1%)	467 (33.0%)
Poor	110 (23.0%)	22 (6.3%)	29 (4.9%)	161 (11.4%)
Very Poor	24 (5.0%)	15 (4.3%)	1 (0.2%)	40 (2.8%)
No Comment/ Don't Know	-	52 (14.7%)	7 (1.2%)	59 (4.1%)
Totals	478 (100%)	351 (100%)	588 (100%)	1,417 (100%)

In relation to the Corduff Needs Analysis Survey there were no direct questions asked about the services provided by An Post.

(ii) Analysis of Outcomes and Comments

- ❖ There is a relatively high level of satisfaction with the services provided by An Post to local residents living in the Mulhuddart, Fortlawn/Whitechapel and Whitestown/Sheepmoor areas – a total of 81.7% of survey respondents within these areas feel that An Post is providing a very good, good or alright service. In considering the outcomes from individual areas it is evident that the highest levels of dissatisfaction are from residents living in Mulhuddart – this dissatisfaction is largely based on the absence of a local post office in the Mulhuddart area and the

- distance which local people living in Mulhuddart have to travel in order to access the various services which are provided through post offices.
- ❖ Positive references were made in the Needs Analysis Surveys to the following aspects of the work of An Post:
 - Local residents are generally satisfied with the quality and frequency of the mail delivery service within the RAPID areas in Blanchardstown. There were a number of positive comments about the efficiency and friendliness of the postmen and postwomen who deliver mail to the houses within these areas. In addition, the mail delivery service is very regular and there are very few complaints about letters and other pieces of mail not arriving on time. There were also positive references to the increasing range of transactions which can now be carried out at the post office (e.g. paying bills, banking/saving services) and there is a sense that the post office is now becoming a type of one-stop shop at which customers can carry out a number of different transactions
 - ❖ Critical references were made in the Needs Analysis Surveys to the following aspects of the work of An Post:
 - There is a need to give attention to increasing the network of local post offices within the Blanchardstown area. On account of the large and ever-growing population of Blanchardstown and the range of services now being provided by post offices, it is important that the management of An Post should improve the range and coverage of its network of post offices within Blanchardstown. In more particular terms, a large number of survey respondents from the Mulhuddart area referred to the need for a local post office to be set up in their area – a post office which would cater for the rapidly increasing population of the housing estates within Mulhuddart and Tyrellstown.

2.8 COUNTY DUBLIN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE AND YOUTH SERVICES

(i) Statistical Outcomes

Services provided by youth organisations

	Whitestown/Sheepmoor ⁴
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%)
Total	588 (100%)

In relation to the Corduff Needs Analysis Survey the following outcomes are of particular relevance to the services provided by County Dublin Vocational Education Committee and youth services:

Usage and satisfaction level with services and facilities in Blanchardstown

	Used and does not say if satisfactory	Used and Satisfied	Used and not satisfied	Not used
Youth Services	1.5%	18.8%	2.3%	77.3%
Adult Education Courses	2.3%	19.5%	0.9%	77.3%

⁴ The Needs Analysis Surveys in Mulhuddart and Fortlawn/Whitechapel did not include questions about youth services

Satisfaction rating for those who have used services and facilities in Blanchardstown

	Used and does not say if satisfied	Used and satisfied	Used and not satisfied
Youth Services	7.0%	82.8%	10.3%
Adult Education Courses	10.1%	86.0%	3.9%

(ii) Analysis of Outcomes and Comments

- ❖ There are fairly low recognition rates in relation to the role and function of County Dublin Vocational Education Committee. Whilst there is some awareness of the services being supported through the Vocational Education Committee (e.g. youth services, adult education), there is only a limited understanding of the fact that these services have been developed through the work of the Vocational Education Committee. A further outcome which emerged from the Needs Analysis Surveys relates to the low levels of involvement and participation in youth services and adult education – in Mulhuddart, Fortlawn/Whitechapel and Whitestown/Sheepmoor very few residents were able to name any local youth service/project (with only a small number of young people being involved in these services/projects) whilst in Corduff a large majority of local residents had not used any youth service/project or adult education course (non-participation rates of 77.3% for both youth services and adult education courses)
- ❖ Positive references were made in the Needs Analysis Surveys to the following aspects of the work of County Dublin Vocational Education Committee and youth services:
 - Local residents who participated in youth services/projects and in adult education courses have expressed a high level of satisfaction with the quality of these services, projects and courses. In Corduff, for example, 82.8% of people who participated in youth activities/projects were satisfied with the services being provided whilst 86.0% of people who participated in adult

education courses were satisfied with the quality and content of these courses. The feedback provided by people in Mulhuddart, Fortlawne/Whitechapel and Whitestown/Sheepmoor is equally positive – comments in the questionnaires completed by residents from these areas would also suggest that their participation in youth activities/projects and adult education courses was a worthwhile and rewarding experience. Therefore, it is evident that a key challenge is to get more local people more interested and involved in youth activities and adult education – once they are involved and engaged, they are likely to derive significant benefits from their participation in various projects and courses

- ❖ Critical references were made in the Needs Analysis Surveys to the following aspects of the work of County Dublin Vocational Education Committee and youth services:
 - There is insufficient information about the role and function of County Dublin Vocational Educational and of youth services within Blanchardstown; and about the activities and projects which are being organised and delivered by these organisations. Local residents who participated in the Needs Analysis Surveys feel that it is important for more information to be circulated and to be made available to local people (in relation to the projects, courses and programmes being organised by organisations like the Vocational Education Committee and Blanchardstown Youth Service). This information should be produced and disseminated in a number of different ways -through leaflets/brochures, through articles in local newsletters, through presentations in schools and various community facilities. On the basis of the enjoyment and the learning which many people are likely to derive from participation in youth projects and adult education programmes, it is necessary to ensure that the existence of these projects and programmes is marketed and promoted as widely as possible with the Blanchardstown area
 - Where possible, youth programmes and adult education courses should take place within local communities in the Blanchardstown area. A large number of respondents to the Needs Analysis Surveys referred to the fact that local

people are far more likely to participate in projects, programmes and courses if these are taking place within local community facilities in their own neighbourhood. Whilst recognising the fact that appropriate community facilities do not exist in all neighbourhoods in Blanchardstown and that there are issues concerning the viability of setting up activities within individual neighbourhoods (there might not be sufficient numbers of participants within these neighbourhoods) a number of survey respondents had a clear view that more activities should be taking place at a more local level. In overall terms there was a feeling that projects, programmes and courses targeted at local residents should be flexible (in relation to the times at which they take place, so as to allow for family responsibilities and other commitments) and accessible (accessible in relation to cost and the ways in which people might get to the centre/location where the activity is taking place e.g. by foot, by public transport).

2.9. LOCAL SCHOOLS

(i) Statistical Outcomes

Services provided by local schools

	Mulhuddart	Fortlawn/ Whitechapel	Whitestown/ Sheepmoor	Totals
Very Good	64 (13.4%)	62 (17.7%)	162 (27.6%)	288 (20.3%)
Good	162 (33.9%)	93 (26.5%)	227 (38.6%)	428 (34.0%)
Alright	145 (30.3%)	95 (27.1%)	100 (17.0%)	340 (24.0%)
Poor	32 (6.7%)	13 (3.7%)	21 (3.6%)	66 (4.7%)
Very Poor	8 (1.7%)	7 (2.0%)	4 (0.7%)	19 (1.3%)
No Comment/ Don't Know	67 (14.0%)	81 (23.0%)	74 (12.5%)	222 (15.7%)
	478 (100%)	351 (100%)	588 (100%)	1,417 (100%)

In relation to the Corduff Needs Analysis Survey the following outcomes are of particular relevance to the services provided by local schools:

Usage and satisfaction level with services and facilities in Blanchardstown

	Used and does not say if satisfied	Used and satisfied	Used and not satisfied	Not used
Local Primary Schools	4.7%	44.8%	4.9%	45.6%
Local Secondary Schools	4.4%	31.9%	6.7%	57.0%

Satisfaction rating for those who have used services and facilities in Blanchardstown

	Used and does not say if satisfied	Used and satisfied	Used and not satisfied
Local Primary Schools	8.7%	82.3%	9.0%
Local Secondary Schools	10.2%	74.3%	15.5%

(ii) Analysis of Outcomes and Comments

- ❖ There are relatively high levels of satisfaction with the services provided by local schools in the RAPID areas within Blanchardstown. In Mulhuddart, Fortlawn/Whitechapel and Whitestown/Sheepmoor, 74.3% of survey respondents felt that the schools were providing a very good, good or alright service whilst only 6.0% of respondents felt that schools were providing a poor or very poor service. In Corduff, there are similar levels of satisfaction with the local schools – 82.3% satisfaction rating with the primary school and 74.3% satisfaction rating

with the secondary school. On the basis of the comments expressed in the questionnaires it is evident that the local schools are a most important part of the overall community infrastructure within the RAPID areas in Blanchardstown; and that these schools generally provide children and young people with a good education. In more particular terms, the Needs Analysis Surveys would indicate that there is a greater level of satisfaction with the local primary schools than with the local secondary schools – this outcome and pattern is reflected in all four of the Needs Analysis Surveys which took place in the designated RAPID areas within Blanchardstown

- ❖ Positive references were made in the Needs Analysis Surveys to the following aspects of the work of local schools:
 - A number of initiatives set up in recent years to counter educational disadvantage and early school leaving are beginning to produce significant results and outcomes. The introduction of special programmes to counter educational disadvantage, the increase in the number of Learning Support Teachers and Resource Teachers employed by some local schools, and positive changes in the school curriculum (e.g. Leaving Certificate Applied, greater focus on civic and social issues) are all noteworthy developments that have been welcomed by local residents who participated in the Needs Analysis Surveys. These developments are particularly important and relevant for young people who might be struggling at school and finding it difficult to keep up with the rest of their class – the additional supports which are now available within the schools will provide these young people with better prospects of progressing satisfactorily through the education system
 - There were positive comments about the commitment of many teachers who are working in schools which are attended by children and young people from the designated RAPID areas within Blanchardstown. These teachers have a clear interest in the pupils with whom they are working and this interest has been recognised and appreciated by a large number of parents who completed the survey questionnaires. These parents are aware of the fact that it can be more difficult for teachers who are teaching in schools within disadvantaged

areas that in schools where there is a strong history and culture of educational achievement and educational attainment. One of the more worrying aspects of teaching in schools in disadvantaged areas, however, is the difficulty in retaining qualified teachers – a number of local residents referred to the relatively high turnover of teachers within some of the local schools and the impact of the turnover of teachers on the educational progression of children and young people who are attending local schools

- ❖ Critical references were made in the Needs Analysis Surveys to the following aspects of the work of local schools:
 - A number of local residents felt that there were insufficient opportunities for parents to contribute to the development of local schools and that, on occasions, the participation of parents in the educational process is not welcomed or appreciated. In these situations, it was felt that all of the key decisions in relation to schools were made by principals/teachers, with little reference to the views and opinions of parents and their children. Whilst other survey respondents felt that relationships between teachers and parents had become more open and more complementary in recent years, there is still a fairly strong view that new strategies need to be developed which would promote and encourage the more active participation of parents within the education process in the designated RAPID areas in Blanchardstown
 - There is concern about the capacity of local schools within the RAPID areas to absorb the number of children who will be entering the education system over the next number of years. A large number of survey respondents made negative comments about the condition of some schools in the RAPID areas (e.g. poorly maintained, over-reliance on temporary portocabins). Whilst recognising the quality of teaching which takes place in some local schools it is considered that the physical state of certain schools is not conducive to the learning and education process – the schools were often not built for the large number of pupils who are currently enrolled. In this context, there is an urgent need to map out a school building and school refurbishment programme for the RAPID areas in Blanchardstown. This programme should take full

account of the demographic changes which will take place over the next 5-10 year period (with the construction of a number of new housing developments) and should use this analysis as a mechanism for lobbying the Department of Education and Science to provide the funds which will be required to refurbish the existing school building stock and, where necessary, to construct new school buildings and classrooms.

2.10 DRUGS SERVICES

(i) Statistical Outcomes

There were no specific questions relating to drugs services in the Needs Analysis Surveys which took place in the Mulhuddart, Fortlawn/Whitechapel and Whitestown/Sheepmoor areas. However, in response to other more general questions, there were a significant number of references to the drugs issue. These questions, and the drugs related responses to these questions, are as follows:

Question	Drug Related Responses	Numbers ⁵	Rating ⁶
What are the worst things about living in your area?	Drugs	M ⁷ - 92	3
		F/W - 86	2
		W/S - 96	4
What are your hopes for the future of your area?	For the drugs situation to improve	M -24	8
		F/W -48	6
		W/S -123	1
What are your fears for the future of your area?	That the drugs problem will get worse	M -113	2
		F/W -157	1
		W/S -150	1

Contd./over

⁵ The number of survey respondents who mentioned drugs in response to this question

⁶ The overall rating for drug issues in relation to this question i.e. No. 1 would mean that this was the most prevalent answer

⁷ M=Mulhuddart, F/W=Fortlawn/Whitechapel, W/S =Whitestown/Sheepmoor

Question	Drug Related Responses	Numbers	Rating
What do you think needs to happen to make your area a better place to live?	Evict drug dealing tenants;	M - 44	7
	Make the area drug free	F/W - 13	10
		W/S -73	5

These responses would suggest the drugs issue is a major cause of concern and worry for many local residents living in the Mulhuddart, Fortlawn/Whitechapel and Whitestown/Sheepmoor areas. In particular, there is a real fear that the drugs situation will get worse and that a large number of young people will become addicted to drugs unless some urgent remedial actions take place in the next number of years – actions relating to the supply of drugs into local areas, to drugs prevention and drugs education programmes, and to treatment and rehabilitation services for local drug users.

In relation to the Corduff Needs Analysis Survey the following outcomes are of particular relevance to the drugs issue:

Usage and satisfaction level with services and facilities in Blanchardstown

	Used and does not say if satisfied	Used and satisfied	Used and not satisfied	Not used
Drug Treatment and Support	0.7%	2.6%	1.7%	95.0%

Satisfaction rating for those who have used services and facilities in Blanchardstown

	Used and does not say if satisfied	Used and satisfied	Used and not satisfied
Drug Treatment and Support	13.8%	51.7%	34.5%

(ii) Analysis of Outcomes and Comments

- ❖ It is evident the drugs issue is one of the major concerns for local residents living in the RAPID areas within Blanchardstown. On the basis of the responses to the Needs Analysis Surveys, it is clear that many local people feel that the drugs problem is getting out of control and parents are really concerned about their children becoming addicted to drugs. There is a sense that there is a drugs culture within some neighbourhoods in Blanchardstown i.e. a culture within which drugs are openly available, where more and more young people are dabbling in drugs, where drug taking is a regular social activity for an increasing number of local residents. Survey respondents identified the clear need to take some type of corrective action to reverse what they perceive to be an ever worsening and increasingly serious situation
- ❖ In terms of practical actions, recommendations which emerged from the Needs Analysis Surveys include the following: the provision of more leisure and recreational activities for children and young people (as an alternative to drug taking); a greater focus on drugs education and drugs prevention within local schools and youth projects; the stricter vetting of tenants who are moving into the area (so as to ensure that drug dealers are not allocated houses); the development of more drug treatment and drugs rehabilitation services for local drug users; and a more active and robust approach by An Garda Síochána in apprehending and prosecuting people who are involved in drugs related activities (e.g. dealing in drugs, possession of drugs)
- ❖ There is a lack of awareness about the current range of drugs services and drugs projects which are in existence within the RAPID areas in Blanchardstown. In response to the question concerning knowledge and awareness of voluntary and community groups/projects within these areas there were only a limited number of responses which related to drugs projects. Of the 1,417 households who completed survey questionnaires in Mulhuddart, Fortlawne/Whitechapel and Whitestown/Sheepmoor, only 22 respondents had any knowledge and awareness of drugs projects within the Blanchardstown area. This outcome could suggest

that there is a clear need for the promoters of drugs projects (statutory and community based) to embark upon public awareness strategies which would serve to inform local residents about sources of advice, information, treatment and rehabilitation in relation to the drugs issue.

3. DELIVERY OF PUBLIC AND COMMUNITY SERVICES – KEY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

3.1. INTRODUCTION

In addition to opinions and comments about the services and activities of individual agencies and organisations, the Needs Analysis Surveys also made a number of other references to the ways in which public and community services are delivered within the RAPID areas in Blanchardstown. This section of the document will consider these more general and overarching issues under the following headings:

- **The integration and co-ordination of public/community services**
- **The provision of information about public/community services**
- **The development of a comprehensive range of public/community services within individual areas and neighbourhoods**
- **The relationship between public/community services and community development**

3.2. INTEGRATION AND CO-ORDINATION OF PUBLIC/COMMUNITY SERVICES

There were a significant number of references in the Needs Analysis Surveys to the need for greater co-ordination between the various Government Departments, statutory agencies, voluntary organisations and community based groups which are involved in delivering services within the RAPID areas in Blanchardstown. There is a certain amount of confusion about the respective roles of these agencies and organisations and a feeling that they could be delivering their services in a more co-ordinated manner. In response to the question ‘What needs to happen to make your area a better place in which to live?’ a number of survey respondents referred to the need for various agencies and organisations to work more closely together in the best interests of local residents. There is a view that individual agencies and organisations often tend to ‘do their own thing’ with little reference to the other agencies and organisations which

are also working in the same geographical areas and with the same families within these areas.

On the basis of these types of responses, it is evident that a greater co-ordination of public and community services would have a number of significant benefits:

- It would help to maximise the effectiveness and impact of the inputs and contributions of various agencies/organisations into the development of the RAPID areas within Blanchardstown – through working more closely together there is likely to be more significant outcomes in improving the quality of life and overall service provision for local residents who live within these areas
- It would result in a more co-ordinated and integrated approach towards the needs of individual families who live within the RAPID areas. Many of these families require a range of different supports (in relation to issues like employment, education, healthcare, housing, income maintenance and budgetary concerns). In this context it is both reasonable and sensible for relevant agencies and organisations to develop co-ordinated and holistic plans for working with individual families and communities within the designated RAPID areas
- It would serve to reduce confusion about the respective roles of various agencies and organisations which are delivering services within the RAPID areas in Blanchardstown. The outcomes from the Needs Analysis Surveys have clearly demonstrated the fact that many local residents within the RAPID areas do not have a clear understanding about the roles and functions of different agencies and organisations. In this context, it is considered that a more co-ordinated and integrated delivery of services will help to create greater awareness about the roles of these agencies/organisations; and about the ways in which they might interact with each other more effectively, in the best interests of local residents

3.3. PROVISION OF INFORMATION ABOUT PUBLIC/COMMUNITY SERVICES

There is a clear need for Government Departments, statutory agencies and other relevant organisations to provide clearer information about the services which they provide. One of the main outcomes from the Needs Analysis Surveys relates to the lack

of awareness which many local residents in the RAPID areas in Blanchardstown have about the work of different agencies and organisations. Whilst there is a relatively high level of awareness about the activities of organisations like Fingal County Council and An Garda Síochána, there is a considerably lesser degree of understanding about the roles of organisations like the Northern Area Health Board, FAS and County Dublin Vocational Education Committee. Whilst many local residents might be aware of some aspects of the work of these organisations, they do not have a full understanding of the overall range of services being provided – this is reflected in the reasonably large percentage of survey respondents who did not feel that they had enough knowledge to be able to comment upon the services being provided by these agencies/organisations.

It is considered important that relevant Government Departments, statutory agencies and other organisations promote their work and activities more widely within the designated RAPID areas in Blanchardstown. This suggestion should apply to all agencies and organisations – even for agencies which have a relatively high profile in these areas (e.g. Fingal County Council, An Garda Síochána) it is considered that local residents need to be more informed about the various activities of these agencies – the role of Fingal County Council extends beyond housing and environmental issues and the role of An Garda Síochána does not only involve the presence of gardaí within local communities. The information strategies to be developed by agencies and organisations working within the RAPID areas should include a combination of written information (e.g. leaflets, brochures) and the organisation of information and advice sessions/events within local community settings (e.g. community centres, resource centres) in the RAPID areas within Blanchardstown.

3.4. THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC/COMMUNITY SERVICES WITHIN INDIVIDUAL AREAS

There were many references in the Needs Analysis Surveys to the absence of important community services and facilities within the designated RAPID areas in Blanchardstown e.g. the lack of playgrounds and play areas, the lack of healthcare/medical facilities, the lack of centres and projects for young people. Many of the survey respondents felt that there is a significant deficit in the provision of

community services and facilities within the RAPID areas in Blanchardstown; and that this infrastructural deficit has had a number of negative impacts e.g. the absence of positive leisure and recreational centres/programmes for young people has made it more likely that they will engage in anti-social activities; the lack of play areas has limited the opportunities for children to play together and for parents to meet (thereby enhancing the feelings of isolation and loneliness which are being experienced by many residents who participated in the Needs Analysis Surveys)

There is a clear need to build up and develop the infrastructure of community services and facilities within the RAPID areas in Blanchardstown. The original plans for the development of ‘new towns’ on the western suburbs of Dublin (i.e. Blanchardstown, Clondalkin, Tallaght) produced by Myles Wright in the 1960s had envisaged the creation of a large number of well serviced neighbourhood cores within these ‘new towns’ – well serviced by a range of different community facilities and amenities e.g. community centres, play areas, local shopping facilities, local schools and churches. On the basis of the feedback from the Needs Analysis Surveys it is evident that the vision contained in the plans of the 1960s is still relevant in the 21st century; and that there is a need for relevant agencies and organisations to work towards a situation where there is a well resourced network of local community services and facilities within areas like the RAPID areas in Blanchardstown. The ongoing development of these services and facilities will serve to create new options and opportunities for local residents, whilst also reducing the possibilities of local people becoming involved in negative and anti-social activities

3.5. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUBLIC/COMMUNITY SERVICES AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

All of the Needs Analysis Surveys produced for the RAPID areas in Blanchardstown referred to the low level of community spirit which exists within these areas – in Mulhuddart 76.2% of respondents felt that community spirit was either poor or very poor whilst the comparative figures for Fortlawne/Whitechapel and Whitestown/Sheepmoor were 59.8% and 76.2% respectively. These outcomes would suggest that there is an urgent need to re-create a greater sense of community spirit and community solidarity within the RAPID areas in Blanchardstown; and to reverse the

patterns of community decline and disillusionment which were expressed by many of the people who participated in the Needs Analysis Surveys.

In responding to this challenge of re-vitalising community life within the RAPID areas, it is encouraging that survey respondents have identified the clear need for local people to come together in a more unified and cohesive manner – the responses to the question ‘What do you think needs to happen to make your area a better place in which to live?’ resulted in a strong opinion that local people need to become more involved in activities and developments which affect their own area. Equally, however, there is a clear sense that this community solidarity and community action needs to be accompanied by a corresponding improvement in the services and facilities provided by relevant Government Departments and statutory agencies. There is a view that one of the main reasons for the poor community spirit which currently exists in the RAPID areas in Blanchardstown relates to a perceived sense of neglect and abandonment by relevant agencies and organisations. Therefore, it is considered important that any re-vitalisation of the RAPID areas should involve a significant improvement in the delivery of public/community services (through additional resources, additional facilities etc) as well as local residents playing a more active role in the ongoing development of their own communities.