

## Consultation Submission

### New Playground at Finsbury, Dundrum

Eoin O'Driscoll

Dundrum Local Election Candidate

Fine Gael

*Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2024*

I am fully supportive of the development of a new playground at Finsbury, Dundrum. It will be a very positive amenity for the local community. I believe that, notwithstanding some concerns, there is broad support and demand for a new playground at Finsbury Park.

I am also very pleased with the Council's decision to engage residents through a consultation process at such an early stage in the decision-making process, facilitating input into the development the playground and allowing for a community-centred approach to its design. It is essential that the development of Finsbury Park reflects the needs and wishes of local residents and users of the park. Active, meaningful consultation is integral to ensuring their views are properly reflected in planning.

Based on extensive engagement with local residents and my participation in the in-person consultation event 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024 in my capacity as a Fine Gael local election candidate for Dundrum, please see my below submission outlining some ideas and concerns regarding the development of a playground at Finsbury.

#### **Maintenance of open green space**

When designing new facilities for the new play area in Finsbury Park, the Council should be cognisant of the benefits the park currently provides as one of few accessible open green spaces in the area. Residents greatly enjoy the park as an open thoroughfare.

Numerous residents also pointed to the flat area, adjacent to the former Notre Dame site, that is used by children for ball games. This space should be maintained for continued use for ball games. The Council should also consider the provision of BoxUp or similar facilities to encourage the utilisation of the park for active play<sup>1</sup>.

The identification of a location for planned facilities should take this into consideration. The Council should consider a dispersal of play facilities throughout the park rather than concentrated in a single traditional playground.

To further support the continued benefits of the park as a green space, consideration should be given to the materials used in park play facilities. Residents engaged expressed a major preference for natural, wooden facilities rather than plastic or metal. This should be facilitated where possible.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://dlrsportspartnership.ie/news/boxup-comes-to-ireland-active-cities-project-brings-free-equipment-sharing-solution-to-5-irish-cities/>

## **Planting**

With the development of a play area in Finsbury Park requiring significant investment and likely landscaping, the opportunity should be taken to provide for more varied planting within the park. A number of residents I engaged spoke of their desire for more colourful and interesting planting throughout the park. Insect-friendly planting should be particularly prioritised to contribute to local biodiversity. This would significantly enhance the existing benefits of the park as an open green space.

The Council should also consider providing for a community engagement in the park's planting. The development of a small community garden could be an extremely positive amenity for local residents. It would also be a method of actively engaging the local community in the ongoing development and maintenance of the park.

## **Provision of accessible recreation facilities for all ages**

Accessibility was a major theme of all my engagement with residents and ensuring a playground and park that is accessible for all residents should be a major consideration for the Council. This should include not just consideration for specific play facilities to be included the proposed playground but also with regard to the potential inclusion of some recreational facilities that support older residents exercise in safe, comfortable and fun fashion.

South Dublin County Council's Tymon Park in Tallaght provides calisthenics equipment for utilisation by park users of all ages. Similar facilities should be considered for Finsbury Park. Fixed equipment (i.e. without moving components) should be particularly considered for more easy maintenance.

## **Site Maintenance**

Major concerns were raised by residents about the current maintenance of Finsbury Park. This includes high incidence of dog fouling and littering as well as ongoing incidents of anti-social behaviour. With the proposed development of a play area in the park leading to significant investment and an increased maintenance requirement, it will be imperative that the level of ongoing maintenance is increased.

Any proposal for Finsbury Park cannot be viewed as a one-off investment but should be linked to an ongoing, plan for enhanced park maintenance.

Thank you for considering the above. If you require any further information or have any questions, please contact me at [eoinodriscollfg@gmail.com](mailto:eoinodriscollfg@gmail.com) or on 087-9224085.