

Ballymun Youth Development Plan

Prepared, after widespread consultation,

by the

Ballymun Youth Development Group,

December 1998

INTRODUCTION

Two of the most striking features of Ballymun are the levels of serious deprivation and isolation being experienced in the community and the numbers of community-based and statutory initiatives that are being undertaken to tackle the social and economic problems in the area.

In terms of young people, the majority of residents in Ballymun are 25 years of age and younger. The Ballymun Development Group believe that any serious effort to meet the wide range of needs of these young people will require long-term strategic planning. It will require no less than the development of an overall Youth Development Strategy which can affect fundamental changes at the level of policy in relation to housing, education, health, justice, social welfare, employment and the environment.

Given the time frame for production of this Plan, it was not feasible to put together proposals for expenditure that would represent a comprehensive development strategy for young people in Ballymun. (Indeed, the resources that it is proposed to invest in Ballymun through this Plan cannot and will not meet all of the needs of the young people in the area.) However, it is intended that the proposed actions in this Plan will provide a context within which such a strategy can be developed and a definite impetus for all the parties involved to undertake the strategic planning required.

The developing plans for the regeneration of the area mean that the Young People's Facilities and Services Fund is coming "on-stream" at a crucial juncture in the history of Ballymun. The whole future of the town and community is currently under discussion at every level.

In this time of change, there is the opportunity to put in place markers for how the community want their young people catered and cared for. It is possible to propose and pursue new ways of taking care of young people in Ballymun. It is intended that this Plan should maximise these possibilities.

How this Plan Was Put Together

The Ballymun Development Group - Gerry O'Donoghue from Dublin Corporation, Hugh Greaves from Ballymun Local Drugs Task Force and Derry O'Connor from the City of Dublin Youth Service Board - met for the first time on the 24th of June 1998. The Group agreed to appoint Alternate Members – Tony Hynes from Dublin Corporation, Fiona Cormican from Ballymun Local Drugs Task Force and Marian Dooley from the City of Dublin Youth Service Board – in order to assist with the work over the Summer months.

In preparing this Plan for youth services and facilities, the Group were concerned to ensure a number of things:

- That the local community and statutory agencies with an interest in or responsibility for young people would be consulted as widely as possible within the time frame.
- That the findings of existing research into the needs of young people in Ballymun would be built into this Plan.
- That existing and planned developments for youth in Ballymun would be built upon and strengthened by this Plan.

To this end, the Group employed a consultant, Claire Casey, to assist them in consulting with the local community, researching the current situation for young people in Ballymun, advising local groups wishing to make applications for funding, and drafting and presenting the Plan.

The consultant began work on the 20th of July. A mailing list of local groups was compiled from various sources (See Appendix One) and 167 organisations and individuals were written to and invited to take part in one of two workshops to discuss the priorities for expenditure of the Young People's Facilities and Services Fund. The workshops took place on the evening of the 29th of July and the morning of the 30th of July.

Two further open days, where the same broad range of groups were written to and invited to come along and discuss the Fund, were held on the 14th and 15th of August.

While Sports clubs and groups were invited to both the workshops and the open days, they were not represented at either. Consequently, a separate information and consultation workshop was held for Sports clubs and groups on the 18th of August.

A separate workshop was also held on the 21st of August with the young people participating in the Fountain Project. The young people had spent some time preparing for the workshop and the discussion was lively and very informative. Eight of the participants made written submissions of their ideas for investment of the Fund and these are included at Appendix Two

During this period, individual meetings were also held with Ballymun Regeneration Limited, Dublin Corporation Community and Environment Section, the Ballymun Partnership, the Ballymun ROUND Manager, Eastern Health Board project staff, St. Margaret's Travellers Community Centre staff, and the Ballymun Animal Caring Association.

A draft document outlining possible priority areas for expenditure was produced in the last week of August. This document was based on discussions at the above meetings and workshops and on examination of existing research in to the needs of young people in the area. The document was circulated in the week of the 24th of August to over 170 groups and individuals who were invited to attend a Conference on the 12th of September. Copies of the Application Form for the Fund were sent out with notice of the Conference and groups were invited to submit applications by the 30th of September.

The Conference was also widely publicised in the area. The intention was to develop consensus about the priorities for expenditure and to offer advice and assistance to groups wishing to make applications for funding. Approximately 70 people from a wide range of groups attended during the day. Follow-up meetings to discuss possible applications were held with 14 groups.

A presentation of the work of Ballymun Development Group up to that point was made to Ballymun Special Committee on the 18th of September. As a result of concerns raised by Committee members, a further workshop for Sports clubs and groups that had not taken part in any discussions so far was arranged for the 25th of September. Meetings were also held with a number of the Estate Forums in the last week of September.

A full list of groups that took part in the workshops, open days and Conference, or were met with by the consultant, is attached at Appendix Three. Inclusion on this list does not mean that every group agrees with everything in this Plan. This list is attached to show the range of groups that it was, and that it was not, possible to engage in consultation with over the time frame. In the event, a total of 17 funding applications were received by the Development Group.

The final decisions about priorities for expenditure of the Fund were the responsibility of the Ballymun Development Group and were made at a two-day workshop of the Group on the 1st and 2nd of October. The Plan was presented to the Ballymun Local Drugs Task Force on the 6th of October and submitted to the National Assessment Committee on the 7th of October.

Key Principles

A number of key principles inform the proposed actions in this Plan:

- Because of the concentrated nature of social and economic problems in the area, the Development Group recognises that all young people living in Ballymun are at some level of risk of becoming involved with drug abuse.
- A vital element of developing services and facilities for young people is the involvement of young people themselves in defining their own needs and devising strategies for meeting these needs.
- Imaginative and innovative strategies are required to engage the most at-risk young people in the community in existing or planned services and facilities.

- Any proposed actions for the development of facilities and services must include mechanisms for active inclusion of particularly vulnerable or neglected target groups of young people. In particular, mechanisms must be developed for equal inclusion of young women, young people with disabilities and young Travellers.

It is recognised by the Development Group that the short time frame for submission of this Plan has placed strains on local groups and organisations. In addition, the prescribed representation of interested parties on the Development Group has severely limited the potential contribution of local groups to the development of this Plan.

For these reasons, the enclosed proposals are intended to allow maximum participation of local groups and young people in the design and implementation of all proposed actions.

SECTION ONE

Profile of Ballymun

Background

Ballymun lies on the north of Dublin city and has the distinction of being the only high-rise public housing complex ever built in the south of Ireland. The estate consists of a mix of 2,814 flats in 4-, 8-, and 15- storey blocks along with 2,400 houses concentrated in an area of 1.5 square miles.

The estate built as part of a response to the serious crisis in public housing in Dublin city that began in the early 1960's and continued into the early 1970's. The original plans for this "new town" included all of the infrastructure that a large town might feature including shops, cinemas, leisure facilities, etc. In the event, the only shops that were built were in the centrally located Town Centre, and it took a sustained campaign by the local community to ensure that the promised swimming pool was built (again in the Town Centre) almost ten years after the housing phase was completed.

The much publicised closure of the Bank of Ireland branch at Ballymun shopping centre in 1984 brought to wide public attention the extent of the deterioration of Ballymun over it's first two decades. In the same year, an Eastern Health Board Special Committee categorised Community Care Area Seven as the "most disadvantaged in the State" because of the particular problems of two densely populated communities within it's boundaries – the north inner city and Ballymun.

A consistent lack of investment in the maintenance and development of Ballymun over 25 years led to serious degeneration of the physical environment. A pilot project to refurbish one 15-storey and two 8-storey blocks of flats was initiated in 1987 and completed in 1993. By 1996, on the basis of the evaluation of the pilot phase, the

decision had been taken to demolish the remaining flats and rebuild low-rise housing on-site.

In the current social, environmental and economic context of Ballymun, it is worth noting that studies carried out in the Wirral and Glasgow areas in the late 1980's revealed a consistent and significant correlation between the rates of known opiate abuse and six indicators of social deprivation:

1. High levels of unemployment.
2. High levels of local authority tenancy.
3. Overcrowding of homes and of an area generally.
4. Large numbers of children in an area.
5. A predominately unskilled workforce in an area.
6. Large numbers of lone parent families in an area.

As can be seen from the following profile, Ballymun as it stands “scores” in the high range of all of these indicators.

The announcement of the decision to demolish the flats was accompanied by promises to regenerate the community as well as re-build the housing stock. However, to date no resources have been allocated by the Government for building anything other than houses. The only resources available for infrastructure are from the European Regional Development Fund through the URBAN Initiative for North Dublin. The managing agent for URBAN in north Dublin is ROUND whose capital projects in Ballymun are an Arts and Community Resource Centre, upgrading of Ballymun Town Centre and the allocation of £200,000 for development of a Youth Drop-in Centre.

The planned regeneration of Ballymun offers the opportunity to rectify many mistakes made in the first attempt and to learn from mistakes made in numerous other “satellite towns” where large concentrations of public housing without supporting infrastructure have led to the development of sprawling ghettos of serious disadvantage. In order to avoid repeating these mistakes, it is crucial that sufficient resources are allocated for infrastructure in Ballymun. The Young People’s Facilities and Services Fund can make a vital contribution in this respect.

Current Social Profile

The last 15 years have seen increasing investment of Government and European resources in attempts to address the social and economic problems in Ballymun. The current demographic profile of the population of the area reveals why this kind of investment has been necessary and why it is necessary to continue to increase investment over the foreseeable future.

1.1 Population

The population of Ballymun has been in decline since the start of the 1980's, a feature shared by many other older, more settled areas of Dublin although the level of decline has been greater in Ballymun. Between 1981 and 1991, the population was reduced by 22% to 17,045 people. Population decline slowed between 1991 and 1996 when the Census revealed 16,566 people living in the area, a decrease of 2.8% on the 1991 figure.

As noted by a 1997 Work Research Centre (WRC) report on the social and economic status of Ballymun, population decline can indicate significant social changes. It appears from the Census data that the most significant social changes in Ballymun are the decrease in actual numbers of young people between 1991 and 1996 and the increase in numbers of lone parent families in the same period.

A detailed analysis of population changes between 1991 and 1996 shows that every age cohort has decreased over this period but there has been a particularly noticeable decrease in the numbers of young adults and children living in the area. This decline in numbers of young people suggests the out-movement of two-parent families from Ballymun, which is supported by two other statistics from the 1996 Census data.

Firstly, there is a wide and untypical variation in the numbers of women as compared to men in different age cohorts as outlined in the following table. As can be seen from the following table, a normal gender balance (i.e. about 50/50) in terms of numbers applies to the population up to the age of 19. Within the age range 20 to 49, however,

the gender profile is such that in every five-year age cohort, the numbers of women sharply exceed the numbers of men. This is particularly true of the cohort aged 25 to 29.

Age	Male	Female	Total
0-4 years	997	1012	2009
5-9 years	930	890	1820
10-14 years	850	724	1574
15-19 years	830	847	1677
20-24 years	795	970	1765
25-29 years	690	1003	1693
30-39 years	826	1064	1890
40-49 years	709	859	1568
50-64 years	1016	1047	2063
64 years +	228	279	507
Total	7871	8695	16566

The second set of statistics, that illuminate the changing gender profile of Ballymun, are those revealing significant changes in household structure. Between 1991 and 1996, the total number of households increased from 4,828 to 5,044. Within this increase, there has been what the WRC describe as a “substantial shift” in the types of households in the area.

In 1991, 42% of all households were made up of couples with their children, including a small number with other household members as well. At the same time, just over 28% of all households were headed by lone parents. In 1991, this was an extremely high proportion of lone-parent households compared to the national average and differentiated Ballymun from many other areas of the country.

By 1996, the proportion of households made up of couples with children had fallen to less than 35% while lone-parent households had increases to just over 37% of all households in Ballymun. This sharp increase in the number of households headed by lone parents is illustrated in the following table:

Household Structure	1996	%	1991	%
Single, no children	829	16.4	804	16.7
Couple, no children	389	7.7	360	7.5
Couple with children	1564	31	1860	38.5
Couple with children + others	186	3.7	168	3.5
Lone parents	1634	32.4	1209	25.1
Lone parents + relative	243	4.8	183	3.8
Other	199	3.9	241	5
Total # Households	5044		4825	

Households headed by lone parents have now become the most prevalent household type in Ballymun. When expressed as a proportion of households with children, lone-parent households increased from 40.7% in 1991 to 51.7% - a majority of households with children – in 1996.

The proportional increase of lone-parent families in Ballymun in part reflects the decrease in numbers of two-parent families living in the area. However, there has also been an increase in the actual numbers of lone-parent families living in Ballymun which may be the result of a number of underlying factors suggested by the Census data:

- There is a high rate of single parenthood amongst young girls. The Census data provides no direct information on this matter, but the number of women over the age of 15 who are single increased from 2,636 to 3,006 between 1991 and 1996.
- There is a high rate of marital breakdown within Ballymun. Between 1991 and 1996 the number of women over the age of 15 who are separated increased from 616 to 702. The number of widows also increased from 264 to 319.
- The pattern of uptake of Dublin Corporation housing in Ballymun is higher amongst lone parents than amongst other categories (50% of applications to Dublin Corporation for housing come from lone parents).

The WRC stresses that further research is required to establish the social reality behind the Census data. They are at pains to point out that there is a need to be

careful of making assumptions about the age profile of young parents and about their social and economic needs.

But a breakdown of the age range of children living in one-parent families strongly indicates a high level of young people, overwhelmingly young women, with children:

	Mother and Children		Father and Children	
	Households		Households	
	N. Units	N. Children	N. Units	N. Children
All children < 15	1186	2254	36	63
All children 15+	337	571	85	135
Other	232	830	27	97
Total	1755	3655	148	295

As a result of the changes in household structure in Ballymun, by 1996 over 46% of all children were being reared in lone parent households, of which the vast majority are headed by women:

	Number of Children	% of total children	Average number Of children
Couples	4532	53.5	2.56
Lone Parents	3950	46.5	2.07
Total # children	8482	100.0	

In taking an overall view of the main changes in population profile between 1991 and 1996, the following points are of particular relevance to young people in the area:

- There has been a significant decrease in the absolute numbers of children under 15 years of age since 1991. However, the proportion of young people under 15 years of age was still 32.6% in 1996, which is significantly higher than the national average of 23.7% .
- The population from which the youth labour force is drawn (age 15 – 25) has also dropped quite significantly. In fact, it is this age range which has shown the

sharpest decrease between 1991 and 1996. Again, however, despite the decline in absolute numbers in this age range, the proportion of the population in this category remains high at 20.8% as compared to 17.5% nationally.

- Overall, 53.4% of the population in Ballymun was under 25 years of age in 1996 as compared to 41.2% of the population under 25 years of age in the country as a whole.

1.2 Labour Force Participation and Employment/Unemployment

The 1996 Census data shows the population of Ballymun DED's A, B, C, D and E to be 11,973 people between the working age of 15 and 64 years of age. Within this number, there are 5,497 males and 6,476 females. The small area printouts for these DEDs reveal that 4,671 of these were at work, 362 were seeking their first job and 2,487 were unemployed. This is a total of 7,520 people participating in the labour force, which represents a labour force participation rate of 62.8%.

Of the 7,520 people active in the labour force, 2,849 were either unemployed or seeking their first job. This represents an unemployment rate of 37.9%. This compares extremely poorly with both the official national figure of 8.7% or the Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed estimate of 18% unemployment nationally. The rate for Ballymun would be slightly higher if calculated for the exact Ballymun Local Drugs Task Force area, which is not exactly in line with DED boundaries and does not include the Willow Park and Cedarwood neighbourhoods of privately owned housing. Figures by neighbourhood are not available at this time.

In any event, an unemployment rate of 37.9% is one of the highest in any community in the country and almost five times the official national average for unemployment.

1.2.1 Youth Employment/Unemployment

In 1996, a total of 2,337 people aged from 14 to 24 were participating in the labour force (1,224 males and 1,113 females). Of these, 957 were either unemployed or seeking their first job. This represents a massive unemployment rate of 40.9% among

young people in Ballymun. The Ballymun Job Centre currently have 567 people between 15 and 19 years of age who are registered with the Centre as job seekers.

Within the age range 15 to 24 years of age, 37.5% of the young women participating in the labour force were unemployed while 44.1% of young men were unemployed. However, the employment status data reveals that while the number of young females categorised as unemployed was 418, a further 311 females under 25 years of age were categorised as undertaking “home duties”. Two young males were in this category of worker while 539 were categorised as unemployed.

1.3 Educational Achievement

There are currently approximately 2,350 pupils attending the 8 primary schools in Ballymun while approximately 850 students are attending the Junior and Senior Comprehensive schools. All of the children attending school in Ballymun live in Ballymun, with the exception of children attending Scoil an Seachtar Laoch which has pupils from outside the area.

Ongoing research and documentation over the past decade points to a consistent pattern of problems for the schools in Ballymun resulting in low educational attainment among the young people attending local schools which is reflected in the following comparative analysis of education participation rates in 1991:

	% leaving school at age 15 or less	% remaining in education at age 20 or over
Nationally	36.1	8.2
Dublin City	39.1	8.7
Ballymun	54.6	1.2

The WRC reports that early school leaving patterns in Ballymun are consistently higher than national or City averages and participation rates in higher education are chronically low. A study of education and training among unemployed people in

1994 revealed the following comparison of educational attainment between unemployed people in Ballymun and the rest of the country:

	Nationally	Ballymun
% of all unemployed with no qualifications	46.7	56.3
% of young unemployed with no qualifications	17.7	37.5
% of all unemployed with leaving Certificate	21.4	6.7

Local research in 1996 estimated that less than 25% of children attending schools in Ballymun complete the senior cycle.. None of the Traveller children living in the area (principally at St. Margaret’s Travellers site) attend the secondary schools in the area. If they do undertake further education beyond primary level, it is at one of two specialist training centres for Travellers.

At present there are no mechanisms for tracking children through primary and secondary school. While it is estimated that approximately 15 children per year fail to make the transition from local primary schools to the Junior Comprehensive after enrolling there, there is no data on children who are enrolled in primary or secondary schools outside the area.

There is also a serious and persistent problem of non-attendance at school among young people from 8-9 years of age and upward. A recent survey for the Ballymun Alternative Schooling Project detected serious attendance problems among 346 children between the ages of 8 and 15 years of age out of a total of 2,258 children attending the schools concerned, i.e. 15% of the school-going population in this age group.

1.4 Welfare Dependency

The WRC report of 1997 makes the point that the distinctive profile of the population in Ballymun means that “labour force data and unemployment statistics cannot provide a complete picture of the extent to which people are excluded from participation in employment”. For this reason, the WRC gathered together

information on welfare payments in general and on Dublin Corporation tenancy status of Ballymun residents that they used to produce an overall picture of welfare dependency in Ballymun in 1997. Through this exercise, they concluded that:

- The extent of dependency on welfare from payments such as Lone Parents Allowance, Disability Allowance, Training Allowances and so on is at least equal to the level of dependency on payments from Unemployment Assistance or Benefit. (Only those in receipt of Unemployment Assistance or Benefit are counted for the purposes of the Live Register or for the purpose of calculating the official unemployment figures.)
- The scale of welfare dependency in Ballymun, particularly in the flats, is revealed by two stark indicators – (1) 71% of Corporation households depend on social welfare as their only source of income, and (2) Just 16% of Corporation tenants draw any income from employment.

1.5 Drug Dependency

Absolute figures for the number of people in Ballymun with addiction problems are not available. At present, the Eastern Health Board Satellite Clinic at Domville House has 215 people on their methadone maintenance programme. Of these, 28 people are aged 21 years or less. There are 120 people on the active waiting list for methadone maintenance, 55 of whom are under 21 years of age. In addition, 35 local people are receiving methadone from the mobile clinic which visits the area. The Health Board also report that 300 people have used the needle exchange at Domville House or the mobile clinic since the service came into operation in 1996.

Professional addiction counsellors and Drugs Workers in the area estimate that there are between 350 and 400 intravenous drug users in the area who have not presented for any kind of treatment. There is also serious concern among these workers and many other professionals and volunteers working with young people about an increasing number of young Ballymun people who are regularly smoking heroin.

While there is no doubt that opiate abuse is a significant and serious problem in Ballymun, alcohol addiction is arguably a greater problem. Again, while there are no official statistics about alcohol abuse in the area, it is the experience of local professionals and volunteers that it plays a huge role in the difficulties experienced by the most marginalised families and young people.

1.6 Conclusion

The WRC reports the total number of children in Ballymun in 1996 as 8,482. This is the number of people in the age group 0 – 21 years of age. This leaves us with 4,653 young people aged between 10 and 21 years of age as of 1996.

It is worth noting that Ballymun Job Centre and the Ballymun Partnership estimate that there is a “floating” population of approximately 3,000 people living in Ballymun who do not show up in Census figures. This suggests that there are approximately 5,000 young people in the target group age range who are living in Ballymun.

These young people are generally living in poor housing conditions within an unhealthy and neglected area. Their homes are located in an area which is severely lacking in local amenities such as shops, cinemas, or cafes, where there are very few quality, usable sporting or recreational facilities and where the amount of safe areas for play or even just “hanging out” is extremely restricted.

A very large proportion of these young people are living in families that are entirely dependent on social welfare for income, many of which are families headed by one parent. Their prospects for achieving academic qualifications or training that will equip them to compete effectively in the labour market are poor. A very substantial minority of the young people participating in the labour force are failing to secure employment.

The life choices that these young people can or will make are currently being curtailed by all of the above factors. The Young People at Risk Programme represents a long-overdue opportunity to begin to consolidate and build on all of the efforts to support the young people of Ballymun in order to offer them new and meaningful choices.

SECTION TWO

Current Services and Facilities for Young People in Ballymun

Introduction:

As documented in Section One, Ballymun is characterised by a high proportion of young people living in the area and a high proportion of these young people being reared in one-parent families. This is obvious to anyone spending an hour walking through the estate on a fine afternoon – there are, literally, kids everywhere.

Likewise, large numbers of teenagers are to be found congregating at the entrances to the flats and in open spaces on any given night.

The community of Ballymun is also characterised by a history of energetic self-help and community activism that is aimed at addressing a whole range of social and economic problems. The level and quality of community involvement in work with young people in Ballymun is a massive resource to the area and is the basis upon which this Plan has been developed.

The current level of services and facilities for young people in the area is described under a number of headings:

- Infrastructure and Facilities.
- Services and Programmes.
- Gaps in Provision

2. Infrastructure and Facilities:

2.1 Sports and Recreation Facilities

The sports and recreation facilities that currently exist in Ballymun consist of a number of playing pitches, a public swimming pool, the Poppintree Sports Centre, the Ballymun Recreation Centre, and a sports hall and gym at the Junior Comprehensive School. The school halls in the primary schools at St. Joseph's, the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary campuses, and the halls at the Senior Comprehensive School and Scoil an Seachtar Laoch are also used for a mixture of sporting and recreational activities both in and out of school hours.

Playing Pitches:

There are 30 soccer pitches and 7 Gaelic playing pitches in Ballymun. Ballymun Comprehensive School owns one soccer and one Gaelic pitch while the remainder are the property of Dublin Corporation. The level of use of these pitches varies widely, depending on the condition of the grounds. At present, 14 of the pitches are not used at all due to the bad condition of the grounds.

There are four all-weather playing pitches within Ballymun, three of which are floodlit. One of these is heavily used while use of the other three varies with the condition of the pitches.

There are two outdoor basketball courts that are floodlit and which are heavily used by local youth clubs. There are also a number of tennis courts that are heavily used during the Summer months for Summer Projects and Community Games.

The vast majority of playing pitches are located on the west side of the estate. The only pitches on the east side are two soccer pitches in Coultry Park, which are used by four Ballymun teams. Of the other pitches, only one is used solely by a Ballymun club (Ballymun United) while the others are shared between clubs and schools. The

majority of clubs using the pitches at Poppintree Park and at Naul Park are from outside of Ballymun.

Swimming Pool

Ballymun Swimming Pool is open to the public seven days per week. It is used regularly by all of the schools in the area and operates a number of programmes to encourage and facilitate use of the pool by the local community.

Poppintree Sports Centre

Poppintree Sports Centre is owned by Dublin Corporation and is managed by a local Management Committee through a Community Employment Scheme. It comprises a large sports hall with basketball, badminton and indoor soccer facilities, a meeting room, sunbed facilities, and a general recreation/pool table area, changing rooms with showers and a reception/administration area.

The building is in need of some repair to the roof and the facilities generally are run down and seriously under-equipped. The sporting facilities are mainly used by Senior football clubs and are under-utilised during the day. Other facilities are used by a number of local youth clubs.

Ballymun Recreation Centre

The Recreation Centre consists of one medium-sized sports hall, two small meeting rooms, and kitchen, office, toilet and storage facilities. It is managed by Dublin Corporation and is currently used regularly for a variety of after-school activities by local schools, groups and clubs.

Ballymun East Community Centre

Ballymun East Community Centre consists of a large meeting hall, reception/office space, kitchen facilities and four classrooms that are used as crèche facilities and

meeting/training room facilities. The Centre is used for a variety of after-school and youth work activities by a number of local schools, groups and clubs.

St. Pappins Youth Centre

St. Pappins Youth Centre consists of a medium sized hall, a large training room and two small meeting rooms, with kitchen, office, toilet and shower facilities, and storage facilities. The Centre is managed and run by local volunteers and is open part-time from Monday to Friday. Activities include Club nights, games, music and sporting activities. A local boxing club is also housed in the Centre.

City of Dublin Youth Service Board

The Youth Service Board currently operate from a Kiosk Unit in the Shopping Centre and from a 3-bedroomed flat that they share with the Local Drugs Task Force.

Youth Clubs and Groups

There are currently 24 Youth Clubs and groups operating in a variety of locations in Ballymun.

While the vast majority of these clubs and groups are operating from basements of flats, some operate in flats, in the schools, in the Poppintree Sports Centre, the Ballymun Recreation Centre, St. Pappin's Youth Centre and Ballymun East Community Centre.

2.2 Education and Training Facilities

Schools

Ballymun has eight primary schools (including two Gaelscoilleanna) and one post-primary complex divided into the Boy and Girls Junior and the Senior Comprehensive schools. All Ballymun schools have disadvantaged status with the Department of Education and Science.

One Gaelscoil has only been in operation for three years and is presently catering for approximately 60 pupils up to 2nd class in temporary premises on Coultry Road. The remaining primary schools currently have a total enrolment of 2,213 pupils with capacity for 4,140 children. The Holy Spirit Boys and Girls Schools on Sillogue Road, which recently underwent major refurbishment, account for the major part of this under-use of school capacity. The Junior Comprehensive Schools currently cater for 538 students with a capacity for 1,400. The Senior Comprehensive caters for 320 students with a capacity for 700.

Youthreach

The City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee operates a Youthreach programme from the Annexe of the Virgin Mary School. Youthreach houses woodwork, catering, computer, arts and crafts facilities.

Ballymun Community Training Workshop

FÁS operate a Community Training Workshop that is located in Poppintree Industrial Estate that has facilities for training in computer skills, catering, hairdressing and general engineering.

Ballymun Job Centre/Local Employment Service

Ballymun Job Centre are based in a shop-front premises in the Shopping Centre while the Local Employment Service (LES) is housed upstairs in the Ballymun Partnership on the North Mall of the Shopping Centre. The LES has two training rooms which are used by the Job Centre and other groups. The Job Centre also have a shop-front premises which houses their computer training facilities.

2.3 Family Support Facilities

Geraldstown House

The Eastern Health Board operates a Family Resource Centre at Geraldstown House that includes a number of services and programmes for young people. The House is a period residence in secluded grounds in need of some refurbishment.

Mater Child and Family Service

The Mater Child and Family Centre is part of the Department of Child and Family Psychiatry in the Mater Hospital, It is located upstairs in the Shopping Centre in Ballymun.

3. Services and Programmes

The principal Government Departments with statutory responsibility for young people are the Department of Education and Science, the Department of Enterprise and Employment, the Department of Justice and the Department of Health. In addition, Dublin Corporation has statutory responsibility for the housing of young people over 18 years of age that are no longer dependent on their families.

3.1 Provision of Education and Training

3.1.1 School Based Provision

In Ballymun, the Department of Education and Science provide mainstream education through the 11 schools located in the area, which currently cater for approximately 3,500 pupils between 4 and 17 years of age. Consecutive studies of school participation and achievement rates in the area have identified early school leaving as a serious and endemic problem in Ballymun.

A study undertaken in 1996 by NEXUS Research on behalf of the Comprehensive Schools Parents Association estimated that less than 25% of students remained in the Comprehensive Schools long enough to obtain a Leaving Certificate. Almost 50% of those enrolling did not obtain a Junior Certificate.

The schools and community have lobbied for many years for both resources and flexibility in the curriculum that are required to seriously tackle the problem of early school leaving. Recent developments in the Junior Certificate curriculum have provided an opportunity to engage the most at-risk young people in a process of certification which it is hoped will retain them within the schools through the Junior and possibly Senior cycle.

At present, there are ten remedial teachers in the primary schools, three in the secondary schools in Ballymun and two Resource Teachers for Travellers in one of the primary schools. There are four primary and two secondary Home School Community Liaison Co-ordinators and many of the teachers are engaged in extra-curricular sports and activities with their pupils.

The Early Start and Breaking the Cycle pilot projects are currently operating in two of the primary schools. The schools also operate Substance Misuse Prevention and Anti-Bullying Programmes and provide a range of attendance incentives for students. They work in partnership with a number of community-based groups to provide a range of programmes in and out of school hours.

Foróige operate a “Stay” programme in a number of the schools which aims to support children making the transition from primary to secondary school. The Ballymun Partnership and the Local Drugs Task Force have recently established the Aisling after-school projects in the primary schools that are aimed at retaining and supporting young children in school. The BITE Programme, which is a joint initiative of Dublin City University and Ballymun Partnership, supports children and young people to move through school into third level education. The Local Drugs Task Force have recently funded BITE to establish a “BITE Óg” programme in all of the primary schools.

At present, educational or training provision for young people who leave school early is made by Youthreach, the Ballymun Community Training Workshop, Geraldstown House Family Resource Centre, the Ballymun Job Centre and the Local Employment Service (see below).

In addition, Ballymun Alternative Schooling Project, a network of the main educational providers and interests in the area, will be piloting an early school leavers initiative over the coming two years. The project aims to assist young people aged 8-15 years to stay in school and to provide additional supports to the small numbers of 10-14 year old children who leave school every year. The only facility for these children at present is at Geraldstown House who have a long waiting list for their out-of-school service.

3.1.2 Youthreach

Youthreach provides second chance education for early school leavers between the ages of 15 and 18. Training includes personal development, woodwork, catering, computer skills, arts and crafts and special project work in the local community. It has a capacity for 43 trainees and currently caters for 39 students who are all from Ballymun

3.1.3 Ballymun Community Training Workshop

The Community Training Workshop provides training for early school leavers and young adults from 15 to 25 years of age. Training courses are provided in office skills, computers, catering, hairdressing and general engineering. The workshop caters for up to 40 young people who are drawn from the wider north Dublin area and special efforts are made to recruit trainees from Ballymun.

3.1.4 Geraldstown House Family Resource Centre

Geraldstown House run a “Schools Group” for young people aged 12 and upward who are out of school. The group caters for a maximum of 8 young people who attend on a daily basis during school hours. There is always a waiting list of up to 20

young people for the Schools Group. Geraldstown House also runs youth work programmes with groups of teenage girls and teenage boys (from 13 to 17 years) and an after-schools group for 7 – 9 year olds.

3.1.5 Ballymun Job Centre/Local Employment Service

The Ballymun Job Centre and the Local Employment Service run a number of pre-employment and preparation for work courses for young people from 15 to 25 years of age. The courses cater for mixed groups of 12-14 young people and run regularly throughout the year.

The Job Centre is also currently managing a European Union YOUTHSTART project for early school leavers. The Fountain project has 22 young people aged 15 – 18 years of age and is providing intensive pre-employment training, work placement and mentoring and support into further training or work.

3.2 City of Dublin Youth Service Board

The City of Dublin Youth Service Board (CDYSB) is a statutory sub-committee of the City of Dublin Vocational Educational Committee. CDYSB has responsibility for promoting and supporting youth work and the development of youth policy in the city of Dublin. It is particularly concerned to promote work with young people in disadvantaged areas.

Research undertaken by Kelleher and associates on behalf of the CDYSB in 1995 identified Ballymun as one of the most seriously disadvantaged areas for youth in Dublin. In-depth local research in 1996 identified six main areas of need requiring the targeting of resources in Ballymun:

- Early school leaving.
- Young mothers.
- Voluntary club support.
- Training for youth leaders.

- Young Travellers.
- Homelessness among young people.

Overall, the CDYSB provides support in a number of ways:

- Administrative back-up to voluntary groups and clubs.
- Grant-aid to registered youth clubs.
- An equipment pool for youth clubs.
- Funding and management support to a number of community based projects.
- Training programmes for youth leaders.
- Provision of trainers for a variety of club activities.
- Organisation of special youth events.
- Support and organisation of Summer Projects.
- Start-up and support of new youth clubs.

The community-based projects currently being funded by the CDYSB address a number of the priority needs identified by their 1996 research. These include projects with early school leavers (Columban Youth Project, Foróige “Stay” Programme and Ag Foghlaim Youth Development Centre), teenage girls and mothers (Women’s Resource Centre), young people addicted to drugs (Youth Action Project), young Travellers (St. Margaret’s Community Centre), and voluntary youth workers (Ballymun Voluntary Youth Council).

3.3 Department of Enterprise and Employment Provision

The Department of Enterprise and Employment provision includes the Local Enterprise Service , FÁS training, the Community Employment Programme and the Job Initiative Scheme. There are 18 Community Employment Schemes in Ballymun with approximately 300 participants, the great bulk of whom are women. There are 74 Job Initiative places in Ballymun. The FÁS Training Centre in Finglas has a policy of reserving two places on each course for participants from Ballymun.

3.4 Health Provision

There are currently 11 Health board Social Workers for the Ballymun/Santry area (one further post is unfilled) and two Dublin Corporation Social Workers working part-time in Ballymun. One Health Board Social Worker has responsibility for childcare. There are ten Public Health Nurses located in the Ballymun Health Centre.

3.5 Dublin Corporation Community and Environment Section

The Community and Environment Section of Dublin Corporation work with a whole range of community groups to provide a liaison service between the Corporation and the community and to support the development and ongoing work of local groups. The Section plays a significant role in supporting the establishment of youth groups and sports clubs through assistance in accessing premises and facilities, allocation of small grants and direct involvement in the management of a number of youth organisations.

The Corporation also assist in running a variety of recreational and sporting Summer projects for young people in conjunction with the local community.

3.6 Youth Work and Youth Clubs

3.6.1 Voluntary Youth Work

There are currently 24 youth clubs operating in Ballymun catering for approximately 650 young people, details of which are included at Appendix Four.

The clubs generally cater for young people up to the age of 16 with the majority catering for the age range 8-14 years. Between them, the clubs provide a wide range of sporting, leisure, recreation and personal development activities for young people.

The vast majority of these clubs are located in basements of the flats which provide extremely limited space for indoor activities. The clubs generally operate for a couple of evenings per week, with just a few available in the afternoons or at weekends.

There are Summer Projects in each of the three parishes in Ballymun which are run on an entirely voluntary basis with support from Dublin Corporation, the CDYSB and the Catholic Youth Council. Between them the Projects run activities for 500-600 children during the Summer months. In recent years, the Projects have been experiencing great difficulty in recruiting volunteer leaders.

3.6.2 *Paid Youth Workers*

There are currently seven full-time and two part-time staff employed specifically as Youth Workers by a number of local agencies, with two more to be employed in the near future. The City of Dublin Youth Service Board is providing the funding for most of these staff. The CDYSB funded Youth Workers are employed by the following organisations:

- The CDYSB: One working to support voluntary groups, establish new groups and recruit and train new youth leaders. One to be employed in the near future to work with early school leavers.
- Foróige: One, part-time, working in the local schools on the “Stay” Programme.
- Columban Youth Project: One working with young people at risk in the Balcurris/Poppintree area.
- Women’s Resource Centre: One working with young teenage women and young mothers.
- St. Margaret’s Community Centre: One, part-time, working to develop programmes for young Travellers at St. Margaret’s Site.
- Ballymun Voluntary Youth Council: One to be employed in the near future to develop the Youth Council and support the development of networking between youth groups.

In addition, the following organisations also employ staff to undertake Youth Work:

- Geraldstown House Family Resource Centre: One working with young people from extremely disadvantaged families.
- Community Action Programme: Two, employed on behalf of the Local Drugs Task Force, working to establish and support new clubs in areas of the estate where there are no youth clubs at present.
- Ballymun Job Centre Workmate (Early School Leavers): One working with early school leavers to progress them into further education, training or employment.

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3.7 Youth Sports Clubs

There are currently two Boxing Clubs, two Football Clubs, one Gaelic Football Club, one Hurling and Camoige Club and one Basketball Club in the Ballymun area. There are no purpose-built facilities for either Boxing Club and no dedicated Clubhouses for the other sports. In addition, there are a number of martial arts clubs which operate in local halls. There is one body-building club which has no access to appropriate gym facilities.

While the sports clubs and groups are open to all age groups, they all have young members. The majority of members of the body-building, boxing, and martial arts clubs are under 21 years of age.

3.8 Provision for Specific Target Groups

3.8.2 Provision for Young Women and Mothers

At present, the only programmes specifically directed at this target group are those operating from the Women's Resource Centre and Geraldstown House Family Resource Centre. The Women's Resource Centre "Going Places" project came into operation in recent months and provides an information, peer education and training

programme for teenage women and mothers. Geraldstown House provides a programme of youth work activities for groups of Teenage Girls.

3.5.2 Provision for Homeless Young People

The Eastern Health Board currently funds two community based and managed hostels for young people out of home. The Ballymun Girls Residential Hostel consists of two flats on Balcurris Road and caters for a maximum of 6 girls from 12 to 16 years of age. The Girls Hostel operates a waiting list that usually has about 5 girls on it.

The Arrupe Society operates a hostel for homeless boys from two flats in McDonagh Tower that caters for a maximum of 16 boys from 14 to 20 years of age. The Boys Hostel do not operate a waiting list, they try not to turn anyone away.

The Health Board Out of Hours Service is also available from Ballymun Garda Station but is severely under-resourced and criticised as totally inadequate by local providers of services to young homeless people..

3.5.3 Provision for Young Drug Users

The Health Board and the CDYSB co-fund the locally based and managed Youth Action Project (YAP) which was established in 1981 in response to the rising levels of drug-related deaths among young people. YAP provide support and counselling programmes to young drug users and their families and run a wide range of community based training in relation to drug prevention and addiction studies.

As detailed in Section One, the Health Board satellite drugs clinic at Domville House currently provides methadone treatment to 28 young drug users.

The Local Drugs Task Force currently funds a number of programmes aimed at preventing drug abuse among young people.

- The Aisling after-schools projects in primary schools.
- The BITE Óg programme in primary schools.

- Ag Foghlaim Youth Development centre's work with early school leavers.
- The People's Writers Group work with teenagers.

The Drugs Task Force also provides small grants to groups for drug prevention and education activities and a minibus for local youth clubs and groups to undertake drug prevention activities. They are funding URRÚS to provide Addiction Studies training for youth leaders and contributed technical assistance to the development of the Alternative Schooling Project.

3.5.4 Provision for Young Offenders

There is one Juvenile Liaison Officer assigned to Ballymun who also covers the Santry area. Figures for the current JLO caseload in Ballymun are not available. There are two Probation officers covering the area who are based in Finglas and have a current caseload of 70 clients 16 of these being 21 years of age and under.

3.5.5 Provision for Young People with Disabilities

There is no provision of services within Ballymun for young people with physical disabilities. A number of young people with mental disabilities attend St. Michael's House at the bottom of Ballymun Road and a number of others with behavioural and emotional problems attend programmes at the Mater Child and Family Centre.

3.5.6 Provision for Young Travellers

St. Margaret's Community Centre was opened at the end of 1997 and provides a facility for a range of community activities on St. Margaret's Travellers site. A part-time Youth Worker has been assigned to the Centre on foot of a contract between the CDYSB and Exchange House Traveller Youth Service. The Youth Worker will develop educational, recreational and sporting activities for young Travellers living at St. Margaret's site.

4. Gaps in Current Provision

The following gaps in provision were identified by the Ballymun Development Group through examination of existing data and research and through the consultation process described in the Introduction to this Plan.

This list of outstanding needs for young people in Ballymun is not intended to be exhaustive – rather it represents the most pressing needs at this time:

1. There is a serious lack of co-ordination and integration of existing provision (both statutory and voluntary) for young people in Ballymun. This lack of co-ordination exists at both a macro and a micro level and makes it impossible to get an accurate picture of exactly how many young people are being catered for at present. For example, there is currently no way of knowing how many young people are attending school outside of Ballymun and consequently no way of determining their achievement rates in school..
2. There are very few safe and accessible local recreation facilities for young people, and in particular for older teenagers (i.e. 15 years and over). The places that these young people currently use to “hang out” are lift-shafts and open spaces with no amenities.
3. Premises and facilities that do exist for youth and sports clubs are limited and generally consist of basements that are unsuitable in many respects. This lack of suitable premises is going to be an increasing problem with the planned demolition of the flats in Ballymun. At present, there are no plans for facilities dedicated to voluntary youth or sports clubs as part of the regeneration of the area.
4. Sports in general in Ballymun are under-developed and under-resourced. There are few locally-based sporting clubs and teams which provide very limited sporting options in the area. There is a general lack of good quality sporting

facilities with no suitable changing rooms and clubhouse facilities for outdoor sports.

5. There is no coherent strategy for involving young people, particularly girls, in sports activities. There is no local agency with direct responsibility for sports development which means that existing clubs are left to their own devices and are operating very much in isolation of each other.
6. There is a lack of accessible training for sports leaders or coaches. There are no locally-based sports training options – any local training must currently be bought in.
7. Services for teenage mothers are seriously under-developed. Given that the most recent Census data indicate that the number of young mothers housed in Ballymun is increasing, there is a real gap in comprehensive provision for these young women.
8. A lack of parenting skills in highly marginalised families is highlighted by many of the groups that are engaged with the most disaffected young people. There is a gap in provision for these young people in that any assistance needs to take account of the entire family situation. However, the fragmented nature of statutory and community programmes for families militates against work with the family as a whole.
9. There is a serious lack of supports to kids at risk of being out of home and under-provision for those who are out of home. The extent of homelessness among young people in Ballymun urgently requires in-depth research. Professionals in the area estimate that between 30 and 50 young people that are not being catered for by the hostels are out of home each night and either sleeping rough or in temporary accommodation with friends or their extended families. There is a need for a “one-stop-shop” service for young people who are in serious trouble/crisis to quickly identify young people at risk of becoming homeless and respond to the crisis in the family as a whole.

10. There are no locally-based programmes for young disabled people and accessibility to mainstream provision is strictly limited. Again, there is an urgent need to determine the exact numbers and needs of young people with disabilities in Ballymun and to ensure that these needs are met as part of the regeneration process in Ballymun.
11. Supports to young Travellers are very limited at present. There is little or no integration of young Travellers, particularly teenagers, into mainstream youth provision in the area.
12. Current youth services are essentially responsive to demand, there is a lack of resources for pro-active targeting of areas/neighbourhoods for the development of youth clubs. The demand for assistance with the establishment and maintenance of youth clubs far outstrips the current supports available. In addition, voluntary groups experience great difficulties with raising small amounts of money due to a lack of easily-available grants for equipment and ongoing running costs.
13. There is a lack of innovative programmes for engaging the most at-risk young people in the area in activities that interest them. Two particular areas for the potentially positive engagement of young people were raised again and again through the consultation process: (a) Despite the fact that the interest of young people in horses and animals generally represents a huge potential for diverting them from drug-taking behaviour, there is no structured support and development of young people's involvement with horses or animals. (b) Community arts work has proven extremely successful in engaging young people who are not interested in sports or in more traditional forms of youth work. There is a need to further develop this work in the area in order to make it as widely available to young people as possible.
14. There is a lack of participation by young people in planning and delivering youth services. There is a need for structured leadership training for young people in order to involve them in the planning and running of services and programmes. There is an equal need to develop accessible accreditation routes for local youth leaders in order to promote good practice in youth work, to give recognition to the

invaluable contribution being made by local leaders and to increase the possibilities for employment of local leaders.

SECTION THREE

Priorities for Investment of the Youth Facilities and Services Fund

In order to begin to meet the gaps and needs identified in Section Two, and to build on current provision in the area, the Ballymun Development Group has identified the following priorities for investment in the development of facilities and services for young people. A number of key principles inform the priorities for investment at this time:

- It is the intention to insure that young people themselves are centrally involved in the development and management of new facilities and services.
- It is the intention to insure that all new facilities and services are fully accessible to both boys and girls, to young people with disabilities, to young Travellers and to those young people who are the most at risk of becoming involved in drug abuse.
- It is the intention to create the conditions where an overall strategic plan for youth provision – including youth work, sports, recreation, education and rehabilitation – in Ballymun can be developed.

The funding priorities are put forward here as an integrated package. The prioritised list for proposed investment from the £7million Capital Fund is detailed first followed by priorities for investment from the £1million Programme fund. Capital and Programme expenditure are outlined and presented separately in the overall budget at the end of this section.

It is proposed to establish a Youth Strategy Group to implement a number of the prioritised actions and to fund existing agencies to implement the remainder.

1. Youth and Sports Facilities Network

1.1 Central Youth and Sports Facilities

It is proposed to develop a network of facilities to cater for youth and sports needs in the area. The hub of this network will be the establishment of Central Youth and Sports Facility at Ballymun Recreation Centre through extension and refurbishment of the Recreation Centre. Dublin Corporation have agreed to make the building and site available for this purpose. The Development Group is currently negotiating with Ballymun ROUND to incorporate their £200,000 allocation for a youth drop-in centre as part of the expenditure for the Central Facility (please see Appendix Five).

The Central Facility will provide the context and opportunity to develop co-ordination and integration of the range of youth provision in the area. A priority here will be the development of an integrated response to young people in crisis.

Co-ordination and integration will of necessity involve the genesis of a coherent and comprehensive strategy for the development of both youth services and sports in the area. Some resources will need to be allocated to achieving the goal of co-ordination through e.g. structured networking, development and maintenance of both a Youth Forum and a Sports Council, information management and other measures.

The Central Facility will house a number of existing and new services and programmes and will have the following facilities:

- A **main hall** for sports and recreation activities to cater for existing demand and provide the facility to develop further sporting and recreation activities with the target group.
- Two **training/education rooms** to provide space for a range of training and education needs identified through research and consultation including training in sports leadership, youth work training for both adult leaders and young people, parenting skills for young mothers, computer skills, community arts skills for leaders and young people, and employment-related skills training. The

training/education rooms will also be available for homework clubs and for elements of the Alternative Schooling project.

- Two **youth work rooms** for youth club activities and programmes.
- A drop-in **coffee shop and internet café** to provide a social focal point, an information access point linked to the CDYSB central information facility, facilities for training in computer skills and employment for a number of young people.
- A **crèche** for children of Centre users and staff.
- Six **offices** for Centre staff i.e. Manager and Administrator (1 office), two Sports Facilitators (1 office), two new Outreach Youth Workers along with existing CDYSB staff (1 office), Workmate and Fountain employment services staff (2 offices) and Reception/caretaking/security staff to be provided by C.E./Job Initiative along with crèche and coffee shop staff (1 office).
- Two **interview rooms** for private meetings with young people accessing the Centre's programmes.
- **Storage facilities.**
- **Toilets, changing rooms and showers**
- A **reception** area including **exhibition space.**
- **Outdoor sports and play facilities** including a floodlit all-weather playing pitch and training area.

1.2 Satellite Youth and Sports Facilities

One Central Facility will not meet the needs of the many local neighbourhood clubs and groups in Ballymun that are currently operating from basements and flats. Apart from the fact that one building cannot provide enough space, the outlying areas of Ballymun and Poppintree are a long walk from the town centre and younger teenagers often cannot (or will not) move far from home and parental supervision, particularly in the evening time.

While plans for the regeneration of Ballymun include community facilities in "neighbourhood centres" there is currently no funding allocated for these neighbourhood centres. Furthermore, all of the people consulted for this Plan made the point that "community facilities" are generally inaccessible to young people and

particularly to young teenagers. This observation is backed up by existing documentation on youth work, which makes it clear that young people want a space of their own in which to socialise as, indeed, do their parents.

For this reason, provision of adequate sports and youth facilities for young people will involve the establishment or development of neighbourhood youth and sports facilities in each of the five neighbourhoods of Ballymun.

It is proposed to upgrade and develop existing Centres in the Shangan, Coultrey and Poppintree areas in consultation with the management of each in order to maximise their potential for use by local young people. The current facilities that will be targeted for development as local youth and sports centres are Poppintree Sports Centre; St. Pappin's Youth Centre (Coultrey) and the Gym at the Boys Junior Comprehensive School (Shangan). Personnel at each facility have expressed a willingness to negotiate development and expansion of these facilities.

New Centres will be built in the Sillogue/Sandyhill and Balbutcher/Balcurriss neighbourhoods. Ballymun Regeneration Limited and the Estate Forums for these areas have expressed a willingness to assist in the development of these Centres.

1.3 Special Interest/Target Group Facilities

In addition to the general youth and sports facilities required, it is proposed to assist in the development of further planned facilities for the area which will all offer the most marginalised young people new opportunities and choices:

Horse and Animal Care Centre

It is proposed to make funding available to build a training facility at the planned Horse and Animal Care Centre. The facility will enable Ballymun Animal Caring Association to provide training and education programmes for young people.

Ballymun United Football Club

It is proposed to make funding available to build a sports hall and club facilities to house Ballymun United Football Club. The facility will enable the Club to develop new youth teams, opportunities for professional training of young people and a range of sport and recreation activities for young people.

Women's Resource Centre

It is proposed to make part-funding available for the planned building of the new Ballymun Women's Resource Centre. The YPF SF monies will go to providing space within the building for a Young Women's information, training and social facility and for the development of a health service for Young Women.

Ballymun Arts and Community Resource Centre

It is proposed to make funding available to build rehearsal and recording facilities into the planned new Arts and Community Resource Centre. Space in the Central Youth Facility for youth bands and drama groups to rehearse and record their work was proposed by many people during the consultation process. However, the planned Arts and Community Resource Centre makes a much more suitable location for these facilities.

2. Voluntary Activity and Sports Development Programme

This Programme is a priority in recognition of the invaluable contribution being made by voluntary youth clubs, sports groups and Summer Projects to the support and development of young people in Ballymun. Two Outreach Youth Workers and two Sports Facilitators will be employed by the Management Committee of the Youth Strategy Group and will be housed at the Central Facility. A Youth Worker\Trainer will be employed by Ballymun Voluntary Youth Council and will work as part of the Youth Development team.

The roles of these staff are as follows:

Outreach Youth Workers

These Workers will complement existing efforts to support young people in existing or new clubs and groups. Their work will be primarily at street level making contact, building trust with, and mentoring young people. They will work in close co-operation with existing Youth Workers to develop and support new clubs and groups and in supporting existing groups to engage with greater numbers of young people, particularly those most at risk of drug abuse.

Sports Facilitators

The Sports Facilitators will support existing sports clubs in their work with young people and will work to develop new clubs and sporting options for young people. They will establish a Sports Council for Ballymun and assist local clubs in developing an overall Sports Development Strategy for the area.

Youth Worker/Trainer

This Worker will have the key function of ensuring maximum participation by young people in the ongoing planning and development of youth facilities and services in the area. They will work with and train young people in leadership and project management skills and assist them in taking part in the management of local clubs and community-wide initiatives. They will also work to develop a Youth Newsletter, operated by young people, for the purposes of greater information flow and co-ordination.

The Voluntary Activity and Sports Development Programme will also provide access to sports clubs and voluntary groups to small grants for running costs and equipment. The Programme workers will assist groups to avail of grants from a fund to be managed by the Youth Strategy Group as well as from existing funding sources for youth and sports work.

3. Young Women's Support Programme

Particular efforts will be made through this Youth Development Plan to meet the needs of vulnerable young women in Ballymun. As previously stated, all proposed actions will need to demonstrate mechanisms for inclusion of young women.

A programme of work with particularly marginalised young women – including teenage mothers, young prostitutes, and young female offenders – will be undertaken by the Women's Resource Centre in conjunction with other relevant local agencies. The aim will be to support these young women to participate in training, recreational and social activities and to assist them in developing employment opportunities.

4. Family Support Programme

All of the people consulted in relation to this Plan made the point that targeting resources at young people who are extremely vulnerable is fatally limited by a lack of attention to the families of these young people. Research consistently shows that young people who become involved with drug abuse are highly likely to be living in families that are burdened with a whole range of economic and social strains. Poverty, alcoholism, drug addiction, violence and family breakdown are all factors that militate against young people making healthy choices.

Effective approaches to vulnerable young people means intervention with the family as a whole. At present, services to youth and families are highly fragmented between a range of statutory and voluntary agencies. Integration of these services will be high a priority for the Youth Strategy Group over the period of this Plan.

The Family Support Programme will seek to promote integration of current services and will develop models of integrated service to the most vulnerable families. The Ballymun Family Resource Centre will pilot a model of intervention with families of vulnerable teenagers. They will work to repair child-parent relationships in families where communication has broken down and will target particular teenagers for support in making the transition from Junior to Senior cycle.

5. Innovative Programme Development

It is proposed to develop two specific Innovative Intervention Programmes with young people who are particularly at risk of drug abuse:

Animal Care Training and Development Programme

Ballymun Animal Caring Association will employ a Trainer to develop Animal Care education and training programmes with young people.

Community Arts Development Programme

The Youth Development Group will employ two Community Arts Workers (one drama worker and one visual arts worker) to provide structured Arts support to the schools and local clubs. The Arts Workers will also be responsible for developing training programmes for youth leaders to build the capacity of local leaders to engage in Arts work with young people. They will work closely with the Arts and Community Resource Centre management team and the Forum for Arts in Ballymun to ensure integration of their work with developing Arts activity locally.

6. Young People at Risk Programme

Programmes of work will be piloted with two specific target groups of vulnerable young people. The Columban Youth Project will work with young people who are out of school and who are already experimenting with drugs in order to develop their potential for returning to school and/or taking up training or employment. Exchange House Traveller Youth Service will make a full-time Youth Worker available to St. Margaret's Site in order to develop programmes and services for young people living on the site.

SECTION FOUR

Operational Issues

1. Implementation of This Plan

In order to implement the proposed projects in this Plan, it is essential that resources be made available to the local managing agency. The Ballymun Development Group strongly recommend to the National Assessment Committee that careful consideration be given to the mechanisms for channelling this funding to local communities.

Implementing the enclosed proposals will involve, at a very minimum, setting detailed targets and performance indicators, monitoring and accounting for expenditure, and undertaking evaluation of the funded activities in order to ensure that relevant lessons are drawn out. This work cannot be absorbed by any existing local agency or organisation without additional resources in terms of staff and administration costs.

2. Central and Satellite Youth and Sports Facilities

In order to ensure the effective implementation of plans for the Central and Satellite Youth and Sports Facilities proposed in this Plan, it is intended to establish a Youth Strategy Group representative of the range of interests in the area. It will be a key aim to include young people in this Group.

The Group will have the responsibility of:

1. Recruiting and managing a Project Manager, Project Administrator, two Outreach Youth Workers, two Sports Facilitators and two Community Arts Workers.
2. Securing temporary premises for these staff.

3. Developing detailed plans for construction of the Central Youth and Sports Facility.
4. Negotiating with and assisting local Management Committees and Estate Forums to develop detailed plans for Satellite Youth and Sports Facilities.
5. Managing the Small Grants Fund for Voluntary groups and Sports Clubs.
6. Securing the involvement of all relevant agencies and groups in the co-ordination, development and integration of services for young people.

3. Implementation Timetable

The Ballymun Development Group propose a six-month lead-in stage for the implementation of actions under this Plan. This time will provide the necessary time to develop appropriate management arrangements for all of the actions, and time for all implementing agencies to recruit staff, to produce building plans, and to work out the details of programme activities.