

FARRELLY AT THE FRONTLINE IN FINGAL

Fingal County Council's latest corporate plan, the development of the iconic Swords Cultural Quarter, plus a range of new housing and economic projects are some of the key priorities for the local authority in North Dublin over the next five years. AnnMarie Farrelly, Interim Chief Executive of Fingal County Council, recently gave Grace Heneghan the lowdown.

AnnMarie Farrelly looks forward to working directly with the 40 elected members of Fingal County Council in implementing the new five-year Corporate Plan and to deliver for the people of Fingal.

With quality of life, housing and economic development representing some key priorities, the developing county of Fingal has a lot of potential, noted the Interim Chief Executive. "That work will be ongoing over the coming months and we will publish the Corporate Plan in the last quarter of 2019."

Fingal's Director of Planning and Strategic Infrastructure was appointed in mid-May by the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government to lead the North Dublin local authority on an interim basis, following Paul Reid's move to the Health Service Executive as Director General.

Following the Local Elections the new council will now represent the 300,000 citizens of Fingal, whose population has doubled since the formation of the county council back in 1994. "The 40 elected representatives come from a variety of backgrounds, communities and age groups mirroring the diversity of our county.

"With 14 new councillors now elected to Fingal since 24 May, I am particularly pleased that there are 11 women on the new council and they will make a valuable contribution over the next five years," Farrelly said.

SWORDS CULTURAL QUARTER

Under Fingal's three-year Capital Programme (2019-2021), the development of the Swords Cultural Quarter is one of the main priorities. A project management services team has been appointed to oversee the delivery of projects within the multi-million euro development.

"The key plan is to position Swords Castle as the focal and cultural hub. The restoration work, which is well underway, is



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being done on a phased basis."

The Quarter will contain a major new central public and civic space set against the backdrop of the historic Swords Castle. It will boast a new county library, public theatre and art exhibition space adjacent to County Hall, as well as a new cultural centre on North Street/Main Street.

Significant landscaping inside the Castle and the town centre will also be undertaken, with the area adjacent to the Castle and County Hall to become more pedestrian friendly.

"The main street of Swords will be brought back to life, and hopefully will bring with it new businesses and a captive market. Swords Castle is now open for business and a number of monthly events will take place, including concerts and family events during the summer."

Meanwhile, a project manager is due to be appointed to draw up the plans, in terms of the county library and the cultural centre, and work will begin on site within the next nine months once planning has been approved. "It will take a number of years before the full project is delivered, but noticeable improvements will be evident year on year, during each stage of the process,"



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according to Fingal's Interim Chief Executive.

"Considerable preparatory work has already been undertaken around Swords Castle and the site of the Cultural Quarter. A consent submission has been prepared for the National Monuments Service to allow for works to facilitate demolition of some derelict buildings on North Street which block views of the Castle.

"The ambition for this much-anticipated project is to create a cultural destination which will make an enduring impact on Swords, as well as providing a new cultural centre for the citizens of the town and the whole of Fingal."

ROLLING OUT METRO LINKS

The Metro Link is now back on the agenda and is due to be delivered in 2027. "Our message over the last decade or more is that this rail link from the airport to Swords is very much needed in Fingal, especially with a rising population in the town of Swords.

"Fingal County Council will have a team working with Transport Infrastructure Ireland and we're very involved in the design of the scheme. The market is there for a rail link in Swords, 70% of the working population of the town live and work in the area, and a lot of the businesses in Swords are connected to the

FACTFILE – ANNMARIE FARRELLY

AnnMarie Farrelly was appointed Interim Chief Executive of Fingal County Council following Paul Reid's departure to become HSE Director General.

Having held the position of Fingal's Director of Planning and Strategic Infrastructure, AnneMarie was appointed on 14 May by the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government, and assumed the role of Interim CEO May until a permanent appointment is made by the Public Appointments Service.

Originally from Corduff, Co. Monaghan, she previously worked for Dublin County Council before joining Fingal County Council; she was Fingal's Director of Housing and Community from 2011 to 2015 before serving as Director of Planning and Strategic Infrastructure from 2015 to 2019. She also previously chaired the boards of the Seamus Ennis Arts Centre and the Drinan Enterprise Centre.

Three years ago AnnMarie completed the Senior Executives in State and Local Government programme at Harvard University, where she spent three weeks on a residency course with other European senior government employees and some US participants.

"We were addressed by some great speakers from the John F. Kennedy Business School, and the combination of executive and political powers from the USA provided great insights into various management techniques on running a large organisation and a multi-disciplinary team, which is a key part of local government management.

"I'm very delighted that Paul Reid supported my participation on this course," noted AnnMarie. The selection process for the programme for nominees from Ireland is run by the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA).



SWORDS MASTERPLANS TO DELIVER UP TO 3000 HOUSING UNITS

*Barrysparks & Crowscastle Masterplan (mixed use and employment generating zoning)

Housing: 700-750 units, nett densities of between 95-110 units per hectare catering for 1,750 to 1,850 people.

Transport: Metro Station, Bus Connect to City.

Commerce: 180,000 sq metres of commercial floor space.

Employment: Space for up to 14,500-15,500 workers.

Open Space: Green corrdiros, Landscaped setting, Games areas.

*Fosterstown Masterplan (predominately residential zoning)

Housing: Approximately 1,200 units, nett densities of between 105-115 units per hectare catering for 3,000 people.

Transport: Metro Station, Bus Connect to City

Commerce: 10,000 sq metres of commercial floor space.

Education: New primary school

Open Space: Green corridors, Landscaped setting, recreational areas

*Estuary West (mixed use zoning)

Housing: Approximately 1,000 units, net densities of 70 -75 units per hectare.

Transport: 1,500m to metro station.

Education: 1 new school for approximately 400 students.

Commerce: 18,000 to 20,000 sq metres of commercial floor space

Employment: Space for up to 1,500 jobs.

Open Space: Broadmeadow River Corridor, Landscaped setting, Games areas.

airport. As a local authority we have to deliver safe walking and cycling routes and we have a plan underway to do that in Swords."

With the National Planning Framework 2040 having identified Swords as a successful place in which to live and work, she said that in terms of future population growth, the council aims to ensure that jobs come with this growth in the sustainable town of Swords.

"Recently we have brought through a number of masterplans for significant land

banks in Swords that will deliver up to 3,000 housing units, with a similar level of employment in terms of the commercial zonings. The concept will be a mixed-use development so people can live and work close to the Metro line."

ATTRACTIVE LOCATION FOR BUSINESS

In addition to this, Farrelly pointed to Swords as a very attractive region for business, with a number of major employers having located there recently. "For example, Ryanair has extended its presence in Swords, while bio-pharma company MSD Biotech will create 350 jobs on their site just off Holywell Road, near the town."

She said that the potential of Swords is already recognised in the market. "So, in planning terms we're basically setting the context under which devolvement can take place, and making sure that Swords will get all the facilities needed to support housing developments and green infrastructure."

This includes the council's plans for the new Swords Cultural Quarter (to ensure there's community space available), in addition to the provision of schools and for early engagement with the Department of Education.

"You need to have a good balance, and Fingal County Council is very proactive in making sure that the Department of Education identifies where school sites are needed. For example, as identified in the masterplans, work on two new school sites will start in September. We have worked hard to identify school sites to the south of Swords where there is the greater demand, so that the Department will be ready to deliver those schools on site."

NEW 6KM GREENWAY 'EN ROUTE'

The recent planning application lodged with An Bord Pleanala for planning consent for Broadmeadow Way is further evidence that the council is also proceeding at pace with the delivery of its three-year Capital Programme, according to AnnMarie Farrelly.

The planning application is for a proposed new 6km walking and cycling greenway route between Malahide Demesne and Newbridge Demesne in Donabate, while a Natura Impact



2019 Social Housing Construction Pipeline

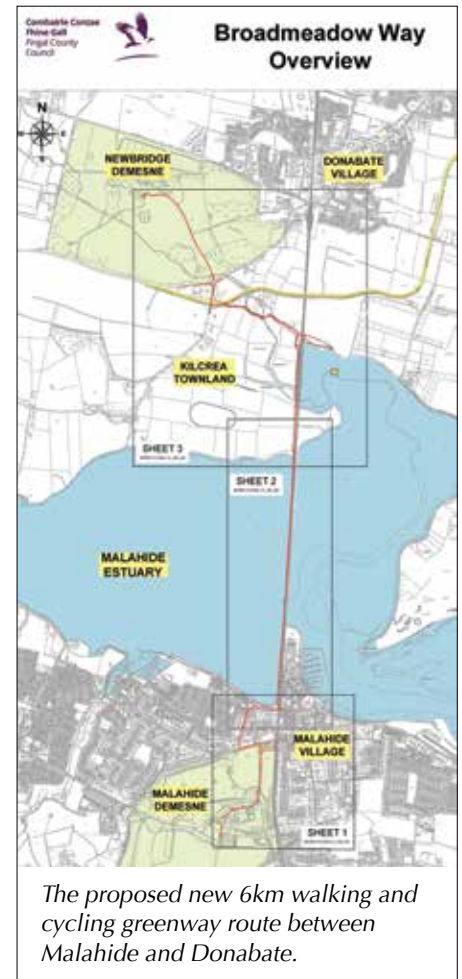
| Development Name | Overall Unit Numbers | Status |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------|
| Pinewood Rapid Build, Balbriggan | 20 units | Completed |
| Wellview Rapid Build, Mulhuddart | 20 units | Completed |
| Racecourse Common, Lusk | 74 units | Completed |
| Ballyboughal | 8 units | Completed |
| Castlelands, Balbriggan | 24 units | Completed |
| Avondale Rapid Build, Mulhuddart | 42 units | On Site |
| Church Road Rapid Build, Mulhuddart | 22 units | On Site |
| Rolestown | 26 units | On Site |
| Pinewood, Balbriggan | 2 units | On Site |
| Rivermeade, St Margaret's | 2 units | On Site |
| Rathbeale Road, Swords | 24 units | On Site |
| Wellview Infill sites, Mulhuddart | 24 units | Tender |
| Tuckett's Lane, Howth | 8 units | Tender |

Statement, Environmental Impact Assessment Report and Compulsory Purchase Order have also formed part of the planning application.

The proposed development will run across the Malahide Estuary adjacent to the mainline railway viaduct and will provide an iconic route for walkers and cyclists of all abilities and ages to enjoy this stunning coastal route.

“Our planning application for the Broadmeadow Way will be a fantastic amenity if its gets the green light. It offers great potential to be an amenity, a recreational area and a commuter route,” she noted. “There has been widespread support for it and everyone who has seen the plans recognises the huge potential.”

It is expected that it will ultimately connect with the proposed Fingal Coastal Way – a 32km high quality, recreational stretch of greenway connecting Donabate, Rush, Skerries, Ardgillan Castle, Balbriggan and Bremore Castle.



“This scheme will bring huge benefits to the communities along the route and will also provide a destination greenway for visitors to the area. With an exciting programme of greenway infrastructure under development in Fingal, we plan to continue to develop a network of high quality greenways over the coming years, as part of our wider sustainable transport infrastructure programme.”

FINGAL'S DIGITAL STRATEGY

Over the last year Fingal County Council has also carried out a number of innovative digital projects including the roll-out of electric car charging points, free town centre public Wi-Fi in Balbriggan and car and bike sharing schemes across Fingal.

Projects planned for 2019-2020 include free public Wi-Fi access points in towns across Fingal, solar-powered compacter waste bins and smart benches, which include Wi-Fi, digital signage and phone charging facilities.



Fingal's Interim CEO AnnMarie Farrelly and Digital Strategy Manager Aishling Hyland pictured with the digital strategy consultation paper.

The council is currently preparing a digital strategy, which will focus on six main themes:

- Digital Economy – Making Fingal the best place to start and grow your business.
- Digital Skills – Promoting digital skills services across the county.
- Digital Services – Building better public services for all.
- Community & Culture – ‘Community-first’ approach to digital.
- Infrastructure & Data – Building world-class digital infrastructure for Fingal.
- Transition to Digital – Planning for the future.

AnnMarie Farrelly said that the strategy will “describe how digital technology can improve the way we live, work and do business in Fingal. Climate change, health and well-being, transport, tourism and public services, are some examples of areas that will be considered.

“Digital skills, broadband, public Wi-Fi and access to public services for those who struggle with technology are also important – we want to ensure that everyone is included. We are asking the public to have their say and help us prepare the Fingal Digital Strategy.”

Hard copies of the Digital Strategy Issues Paper are available at Fingal Libraries. Further details are available at **consult.fingal.ie**.

“Fingal County Council has many

important infrastructure projects to be delivered, which are now at the planning or pre-planning stages. Improved local facilities for our residents in addition to greater housing services and economic developments are the key priorities,” she concluded.

