



DUBLIN
NORTH EAST
INNER CITY

NEIC INITIATIVE PUBLIC CONSULTATION WHAT YOU SAID



May 2024



The North East Inner City (NEIC) Initiative was set up to make the area a safe, attractive and vibrant living and working environment for the community and its families with opportunities for all to lead full lives.

In May 2024, the NEIC Initiative asked people to share their experiences, opinions, and suggestions to help create a strategy until 2027. People were also asked to share their views on policing, education and training, family and youth wellbeing, community, the physical environment, substance abuse and healthcare. This is the first time such an extensive consultation has been used to inform the planning process.

This is a summary of what people said online, at drop-in sessions, or in focus groups representing different groups in the area.



407 people took part in the consultation between May to June 2024



343 questionnaire responses online or in person



5 focus groups



5 drop in sessions

- Service providers workshop.
- Hill St Family Resource Centre.
- UISCE (Advocacy For People Who Use Drugs)
- Lourdes Day Care Centre.
- Dublin Adult Learning Centre (DALC)

LIVING IN THE AREA

WHAT PEOPLE VALUE

What people value most about living in the area is the strong sense of community and the community spirit. People shared that they value good neighbours who looked out for them, lots of good parks and services nearby, being close to the city centre, good transport and a vibrant atmosphere.

Many people value the history of the area, and the cultural mix which gives the area character. They enjoy the events, like The Big Scream or St. Patricks Day Parade, that allow them to celebrate what makes the North East Inner City special.

Positive changes mentioned were improvements in local parks and facilities such as community centres, the swimming pool, and the upgrading of social housing. People also said that more trees and planting around the area improved the look of the place.



“ Sense of belonging there. Extended families are close by. Change and new people coming in is good too. (Online consultation) ”

“ My neighbours are lovely. People are concerned for each other, look after one another. (Online Consultation) ”

“ The people is the main positive and the fact that everything is within walking distance. We have a lot of services in the inner city which is also a very positive thing. (Parents group) ”



LIVING IN THE AREA CHALLENGES

People shared what they saw as the challenges of living in the area - many feel less safe, especially at night time and said that there was more drug taking happening in public. Challenges mentioned included volumes of traffic, litter and dog fouling. The areas of homelessness and derelict building were called out with others mentioning building work for hotels and student accommodation.

Service providers mentioned that COVID had reduced support for the most vulnerable in the community and had not recovered since. Others shared that the cost of living, increased rent and less long-term accommodation are making it hard to stay in the area. A few mentioned pressures on accommodation from refugees, students and tourists.

People would like to see a more secure and inclusive community with more affordable housing, better physical environment and more social support for vulnerable people and families.



There is not much for teenagers to keep them occupied. There needs to be more for the kids – to catch them when they are young.
(Senior Citizens Group)



The area could be so much more... There are hooded boys and men with masks flying around on scooters and bikes ... its extremely intimidating.
(Online consultation)



ENHANCED POLICING

Improving the safety and security of people living in the area is a key goal of the NEIC Initiative. People mentioned that anti-social behaviour had increased and stopped some people from using the parks. People with children and older people felt the use of E-scooters and E-bikes made them feel unsafe.

People said that creating a safer environment is essential for the overall wellbeing of the community and that having more Garda visible on the street would be helpful. They also suggested that the Garda work closely with the community and young people to help build trust and security.



“ The sense of lawlessness is getting worse not better. The tolerance for illegal dumping, drug selling and use, consumption of alcohol, ... is far too high compared to other areas. (Online consultation) ”

“ The level of crime has increased significantly. I was born and raised in East Wall and it makes me sad that I can't walk safely around at night or when it's dark without feeling on edge. (Online Consultation) ”



ENHANCING COMMUNITY WELLBEING AND THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Improving the look of the area, creating nice public spaces and supporting people to connect across the community is a goal of the NEIC Initiative. People appreciated the new parks and planting, saying they use them with their kids, for exercise, and meeting others. People would like even more green areas, better upkeep of parks, and monitoring of antisocial behaviour. Some were concerned that heavy traffic makes it unsafe to access parks, schools and shops.

The community events and arts events were mentioned as being very important in bringing the community together, especially after COVID and people would like to see more of these in the future. The events were seen as a positive way to celebrate the history of the area, to find out about new communities and to have fun together.

People would like to see the creation of more spaces for community events. Many people provided suggestions and some of these are shared below.

“...an increase in positive initiatives for young people in the area. The involvement of Leinster rugby, Scoil Ui Choineal, Basketball ... and the involvement of schools in the City Connects Programme. (Online consultation)”

“The area of youth and child care requires a commitment to capital investment to secure suitable accommodation for services. (NICCC submission)”

“There is such a vibrant community ... Hillstreet family day is a lovely event....would be lovely to see more events to support positive community spirit and good news stories. (Parents group)”



YOU WOULD LIKE

More play spaces

YOUR IDEAS

- Indoor play areas,
- Play spaces for older kids
- Family events in the parks

More ways to stay healthy

- More gyms/football clubs
- Outdoor gyms
- Extend public swim times
- Single lane on cycle path

To enjoy the public spaces more

- Make parks safer
- Make the Canal Walk safer
- Neighbourhood clean ups
- Weekend markets
- Year round cultural events
- Better paving for walking
- Less traffic/ more pedestrian spaces

More Green Spaces

- More trees and green spaces
- Longer opening hours for Mud Island
- New community garden in Rutland Street

To celebrate Community Spirit

- Intercultural events
- Youth choirs/ drama clubs
- Investment in cultural spaces
- Develop Aldeborough house as an arts centre.
- Community arts festival and parade
- Inclusive Irish classes
- Community projects designed with local groups.
- Events for people with special needs

FAMILY AND YOUTH WELLBEING

The NEIC Initiative works to support family and youth wellbeing. People highlighted that access to services can be a concern. Service providers also mentioned they do not have enough resources or staff to meet the needs of people in the area.

Parents mentioned long waiting lists and not enough childcare and afterschool care spaces. Service Providers highlighted the need for increased home visits for more vulnerable families, early childhood education, language support for immigrant children and helping at risk young people stay in school. Many people highlighted the positive impact of existing youth centres and sports clubs. It was suggested the importance of providing more spaces and ensuring the inclusion of young people from all backgrounds.

Senior residents said that support for older people helps to overcome loneliness, stay fit and have fun. People felt these services are important and organisations providing them need to be supported.

Parents of and people with disabilities shared that they did not have enough access to services. Better coordination and information was mentioned to help people access support.

“ We can't find a crèche for our three year old, so one of us has to take time off, it is not great for our kid not to be with other kids.
(Parent group) ”

“ I like the Lourdes Centre – it has good activities: games, bingo. I like the people. I also go to Friends of the Elderly and Alone.
(Senior citizen group) ”

“ Non-existent services. No help for people struggling. Being disabled means I have to stay home and be unseen and unheard. (Online consultation) ”

MAXIMISING EDUCATIONAL, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Increasing access to education, training, and employment at all life stages is a key NEIC Initiative goal. Discussions with parents and service providers showed how adult education can transform lives and families. Supporting lifelong learning was seen as crucial for developing community leaders. People spoke of some barriers such as lack of childcare and also lack of confidence in applying for courses.

People were concerned that there were not enough job opportunities for some living in the area. For some groups, issues such as addiction, lack of education, or homelessness were identified as preventing them from getting a job.



“ There needs to be a large investment in pre-apprenticeship training Many students in the NEIC find it difficult to qualify for Apprenticeship programmes as the eligibility criteria is beyond them. (Online consultation) ”

“ I don't think she would be there [in college] if I didn't come here [to DALC]. There's a ripple effect. (Adult education group) ”

“ From personal experience homelessness can be a big barrier to finding a job, as I was ashamed of my current address being a hostel but also the insecurity about housing. (Online consultation) ”

SUBSTANCE USE, MISUSE AND INCLUSIVE HEALTH

The NEIC Initiative aims to improve access to health and social services for people who use and misuse drugs and alcohol.

People were concerned about open drug use. They want to see better support services for those using drugs. There were calls for more safe spaces and mental health services for drug users. Other groups mentioned that there needs to be better access to health services for refugees and homeless people. Service providers mentioned the need for more coordination to improve the health and wellbeing of all these groups.

“ Adopt trauma-informed models across the board, in all sectors, treat addiction as a medical issue rather than a social issue, fund addiction services across the board..... (Online consultation) ”

“ You can't arrest your way out of drug addiction, there needs to be a health-led approach and better less focus on the criminalisation of drug users, more support. (UISCE group) ”

“ There are some great sports centres in the area for all the above. It's about encouraging people to sign up as for some, the confidence isn't there. (Online consultation) ”

NEXT STEPS

The NEIC Initiative will take the insights and feedback of the community to shape the forthcoming strategy for the North East Inner City.

People said that they were happy that they had been given an opportunity to share their views. The NEIC initiative will continue to consult with people and groups to include the community in all developments.

People who shared with the consultation suggested that the new strategy should:

1. Increase visible garda presence and community-based policing approaches
2. Expand the community events and engagement activities to support community spirit and understanding.
3. Continue to make public spaces safe and enjoyable: more green spaces, safe outdoor spaces and places for young and old to be active year-round.
4. Provide more resources and improved coordination to support for the most vulnerable in the area - especially child and youth services, drug users, homeless and refugees.
5. Continue to support education and training initiatives and encourage people at all stages of life to participate.
6. Develop community leaders and increase inclusion of all community voices in local programmes.
7. Coordinate support for those living with addiction and homelessness based on compassion and recognising their trauma.
8. Improve service providers access to resources, training and funding.



THANK YOU

We would like to thank the North East Inner City community, service providers and focus group participants for their valuable time and insight in this Public Consultation.

For queries on NEIC strategy 2024-2027 please contact:

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NEIC has helped all service providers – it has provided networking, kinship, helping to create a culture of ‘reaching out’ amongst service providers. (Service Providers group)

The people from the community need to be listened to more. And their feedback needs to be taken on board after them given their feedback. (Online consultation)

The solution to the problems faced by the area is primarily going to be resolved by those working and living here, who instinctively work collaboratively. (Submission from the Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice Submission)

