KEEPING IN TOUCH
with Dublin West
Spring 2014

NEW CHILDREN CENTRE A MAJOR STATEMENT OF CONFIDENCE IN CONNOLLY HOSPITAL

A new centre providing emergency and outpatient care for children in the greater Dublin area is to be located in Connolly Hospital. This is a major statement of confidence in Connolly and confirms the hospital’s future at the very heart of healthcare in Dublin.

Having fought for better facilities for Connolly for many years, I am very happy to confirm that this vital centre has been approved for the hospital campus. The centre is part of the wider, improved healthcare structure the Government is putting in place for children.

As you know, the new National Children’s Hospital is to be built alongside St James’s Hospital in the city centre. But the Children’s Hospital would not be sufficient on its own. It’s imperative that the Children’s Hospital have satellite centres that offer first-class care and are easily accessible for families.

Connolly ticks all those boxes, and that’s why my Cabinet colleagues and I have agreed that Connolly should be the location for one of two satellite centres that will be built. The second satellite centre will be in Tallaght.

It means that in addition to the Children’s Hospital, there will be first-class additional facilities at Connolly and Tallaght to provide high quality, safe, accessible emergency and outpatient care for children in Dublin.

The Connolly and Tallaght centres, once built, will provide an estimated 41% of the emergency care required for children in the greater Dublin area, equivalent to about 50,000 attendances a year. It’s expected that the centres will open from 7.30am to 10pm. The centres will be built in advance of the Children’s Hospital, and should be completed by mid-2016, at a cost of €50 million.

GROWTH IN JOBS IS THE REAL TEST OF RECOVERY

There is much talk of recovery in the Irish economy. After such a long period of recession people are understandably asking if it is for real and if it will last. The single most important test is how the number of people at work has changed in the past year. In the last few months of 2013 there were 23,000 more people working than just three months earlier. Over the whole year there were 58,000 more at work.

What makes it more encouraging is that there is every indication of it continuing into 2014. Cranes are back on the skyline in the centre of Dublin. An increasing number of construction sites are showing new activity. Carpenters, electricians, building workers as well as architects, engineers and surveyors, are all back in action as new projects get underway.

These figures have been tested and proved correct. The separate figures for income taxes confirm the trend. It means that in 2013 jobs were being created at a rate that was as good as in the boom years when it seemed jobs were growing on trees.

To put it another way, 4 years of job destruction have been reversed over the past 12 months.

We now have grounds for optimism that the worst is over. International companies are coming to Ireland and local businesses are expanding. 60,000 new jobs this year would bring our unemployment rate to 11%. I hope we can do better than that and achieve a real breakthrough by getting it down to 10% which will work wonders for future budgets.
IBM OPERATIONS CENTRE A FURTHER JOBS BOOST FOR DUBLIN WEST

IBM’s decision to locate its new Software Services Operation Centre in Mulhuddart is another welcome jobs boost for Dublin West. It follows a number of other ICT-related jobs announcements in Dublin West in recent months, demonstrating the area’s importance as an ICT hub.

IBM is establishing the new centre at its Technology Campus in Mulhuddart. The facility will be a multilingual operations centre for IBM’s global software services and will create up to 40 new roles. This follows the recent announcement by Liberty Mutual of 150 new technology jobs in its Blanchardstown office.

The Government has placed a major emphasis on securing new jobs in the ICT sector, and that work is clearly paying off in Dublin West. I am confident that we will see further such announcements in the coming months as the economy recovers and Ireland continues to attract leading companies both to locate and expand here.

€280M IN TOP-UP PAYMENTS FOR LOW-PAID WORKING FAMILIES

Family Income Supplement (FIS) is a weekly tax-free top-up payment for low-paid workers who have children. It gives low-income families the crucial extra assistance they need to stay in work and build towards financial independence over time.

Because of the importance of FIS, I am increasing the budget for it this year to more than €280 million – a 25% increase since 2012. Already, more than 44,000 families with more than 98,000 children benefit from the scheme. The extra money will ensure FIS will benefit many more families.

I am increasing the budget for FIS despite the pressures on the overall welfare budget. This is because of its crucial importance to working families. All the evidence shows that people are better off in work, and FIS helps recipients to gain a firm foothold in work and build a better future for their families. Welfare recipients considering a job offer but unsure of the potential financial benefits should avail of the Benefit of Work Ready Reckoner at www.welfare.ie or in the Department’s Intreo centres nationwide.

The Ready Reckoner is a tool that highlights the difference for jobseekers between potential income from work and the welfare payments they currently receive. Importantly, the Ready Reckoner outlines the Family Income Supplement a jobseeker will receive if they have children and are eligible for the scheme. The tool helps jobseekers assess the benefits of taking up work opportunities as the economy recovers and 1,200 new jobs a week are created.

HSE FUNDING SECURED FOR ST FRANCIS HOSPICE BLANCHARDSTOWN

I can now confirm that an allocation of €1m has been provided in the HSE’s 2014 Service Plan to fund the phased opening of the 24 bed in-patient unit beds in St. Francis Hospice. The HSE has been engaged with the Board and Management of St Francis Hospice in order to ensure that the unit will operate as efficiently as possible, and where practicable staffing and support services will be shared across the two locations in Blanchardstown and Raheny. We will continue to work in partnership with the Hospice to develop a plan for the phased and full opening of the 24 beds in the unit.

IBM at the launch of Coolmine Community School’s Healthy Living Awareness plan.
FUNDING FOR CYCLE WAYS THROUGHOUT DUBLIN WEST

I welcome this initiative to get people “on their bikes.” Whether it is for commuting, getting to school, or simply keeping fit, these new cycle lanes will help the cyclists of Dublin West to get to their destination via the safest possible route. Three of the major projects to receive funding are the Ongar Cycle Network, the Royal Canal Cycle Scheme, and the Blanchardstown to Phoenix Park Cycle Way. In excess of €1.3 million will be spent on these amenities over the coming year.

It is important to maintain and develop recreational and sporting facilities and services in communities. Dublin West has a proud tradition of walking clubs, cycling enthusiasts and many outdoor pursuits. I hope that these new cycle ways will facilitate and contribute to these traditions. More information and maps of these routes can be accessed on my website www.joanburton.ie

A BRIGHT FUTURE PREDICTED FOR INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY BLANCHARDSTOWN

My Labour Party colleague, Cllr. Michael O Donovan, who is a member of the Governing Body of the Institute of Technology, believes that our local third-level College will be one of the first to benefit from new legislation allowing the Institutes to become Universities. The ITs in Blanchardstown and Tallaght have already announced their intention to join with DIT to become the Dublin Technological University.

Michael believes that Minister Quinn’s recent appointment of noted educationalist Dr. Tom Collins as Board Chair of both DIT and ITB will help the pace of development.

IT Blanchardstown has already proven its worth in producing highly skilled graduates thus helping to bring investment and jobs, particularly high-tech jobs, to Dublin 15. As part of a Dublin Technological University, it will deliver even more for our community.

MULHUDDART COMMUNITY CENTRE

Along with my Labour Party colleague Cllr. Mary McCamley, we are delighted to welcome the Sports Nation funding granted recently to the Mulhuddart Community Centre. Mary, who is a resident of Mulhuddart, has also welcomed additional funding from Fingal County Council which has agreed to match this funding by 30% up to a sum of €95,500.

Part of the funding will go to the refurbishment of the all-weather pitch, changing the surface from sand to rubber, making it easier and safer to play on. Players will know that falling on a sand pitch can cause some difficulties so it will be a welcome upgrade for the many participants who use the pitch on a regular basis.

New contemporary lighting will be installed throughout the area and fencing will be fitted to enhance the whole aesthetic look of the Centre.

Money from a previous older grant will now be used to extend the car parking facility bringing the number of parking places up to 30.

Whereas this particular funding will not go towards the actual physical structure of the centre itself, it is hoped to apply for further grants/funding in the near future to meet some of the outstanding issues connected with the building and we wish them well with their application.

CLLR. JOHN WALSH WORKING WITH MINISTER JOAN BURTON TD

In my last leaflet I introduced you to John Walsh, Local Area representative for Blanchardstown, Castleknock and Clonsilla. Since then John has been co-opted to Fingal County Council to succeed my colleague Peggy Hamill as your local Councillor.

Local issues John is working on:

- Worked with College Gate residents to secure commitments from Fingal Council and the developer of the neighbouring site to establish a clear boundary between College Gate estate and the building site, by maintaining existing screen trees and building a wall.
- Arranged a site meeting for residents in Brompton with the Council to make the case for badly needed public lighting in Brompton Park.
- Sought an investigation by the Council of a disused, unsightly and possibly derelict site adjacent to Castleknock village, along with the planting of trees to screen Castleknock Park from this site.

We have a strong community spirit in our area but more needs to be done to improve local amenities, protect services and support community organisations. I believe in working with local communities, sports clubs and residents’ associations to find constructive solutions to local problems. Please don’t hesitate to contact myself or John on any issue you wish to raise with us.
DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL RELAXES HOUSING DENSITY REGULATIONS

Dublin City Council has changed its development policies to allow the construction of more houses instead of apartments. Density regulations are now being relaxed in the Ashtown-Pelletstown area.

Area Representative Brendan Carr and I are anxious to progress these plans for more traditional housing that are responsive to the needs of the area, allowing the development of the sort of family homes people wish to buy. It is critically important to develop planning policies that allow the building of more three and four family homes rather than just high rise apartments.

In Ashtown-Pelletstown about 2,000 apartments and 400 houses have been built of 4,000 units initially envisaged. Dublin City Council now estimates there will be about 3,500 units in total when the scheme is complete. It is not stipulating developers must or should build houses but the relaxation in densities will make more traditional family homes more viable.

YOUR LOCAL LABOUR TEAM

Cllr. John Walsh
Castleknock Area
Mobile 087 3832089
johnm.walsh@fingalcoco.ie

Cllr. Mary McCamley
Mulhuddart Area
Mobile: 087 6501441
marymccamley@gmail.com

Cllr. Michael O’Donovan
Mulhuddart Area
Mobile: 087 220 7798
michael.odonovan@fingalcoco.ie

EMER COSTELLO MEP HOLDING THE TROIKA TO ACCOUNT

Last month I accompanied to Dublin a delegation of MEPs who are holding an inquiry into the actions of the Troika. The legacy of Fianna Fáil’s mishandling of the economy coupled with the Troika’s austerity programme continues to be felt by Ireland, post bailout. Indeed, for those who have become long-term unemployed and for families that have been divided by emigration, the social and economic costs will be felt for years to come. Thankfully, Ireland has now started on the road to recovery. To ensure our recovery continues in a sustainable way, there needs to be resolution to the unfair banking debt being saddled on the backs of the Irish taxpayer.

The decision by the Troika not to allow the Government to implement burden sharing with senior unguaranteed bondholders when it came into office in 2011, has left Ireland with an unsustainable debt. As MEP for Dublin, I am working with my colleagues in the European Parliament to ensure that Europe honours its commitment at the Summit in June 2012 to break the link between Banking and Sovereign debt.

Emer is hosting a series of seminars in Dublin on the introduction of a Youth Guarantee. If you would like to attend one of these events please contact her office on 01 8746109 or find details on her website www.emercostello.ie

To contact Joan

- Call her on 6184006 (office hours)
- Email her: joan.burton@oireachtas.ie with any query or your views on current local and national issues
- Write to her: Joan Burton TD, Leinster House, Dublin 2
- Visit her web site www.joanburton.ie to keep up to date on her activities in the Dáil and in Dublin West.