

**On The Balcony Of A New Millennium**  
*Regenerating Ballymun:*  
*Building on 30 Years of Community Experience, Expertise and Energy*

**Ballymun Community Action Programme November 2000**

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# Executive Summary

Thirty years ago when the Ballymun public housing scheme was built in response to the then housing crisis in Dublin, it was to be a symbol of a new modern Ireland with all the facilities of a new town. However, only a few of the amenities that were planned ever came into existence. As the decades passed the community had to fight hard for the basic facilities needed for a town of 20,000 people. The current plans for the regeneration of Ballymun, which include proposals for extensive new infrastructure such as shops, playgrounds and neighbourhood facilities, echo the proposals made thirty years ago.

This report is born out of considerable local concern that the mistakes of thirty years ago will be repeated. Local people are concerned that the needs of the Ballymun community will not be heard and that the support and development of a social, economic and community infrastructure along with regeneration of the housing stock will again be neglected.

This report is the result of a two-year process arising out of an ongoing commitment by the Ballymun Community Action Programme (CAP) to identifying and responding to the needs of local community and voluntary groups. On foot of the 1997 announcement by the Government to undertake the regeneration of Ballymun and the establishment of Ballymun Regeneration Limited (BRL) to manage the regeneration, CAP applied to the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs (DSCFA) for funding to undertake a project with the following aim and objectives:

## **Aim:**

The aim of this project is to research the level of awareness among community groups in Ballymun of the potential consequences of the regeneration process on groups and their participants and to support community groups in Ballymun to have an active role in the creation of the new community, social and economic infrastructure for the new Ballymun.

## **Objectives:**

- To assess the extent of consultation between community groups in Ballymun and Ballymun Regeneration Limited.
- To investigate the level of awareness among community groups as to the effects of the regeneration on their group and its participants.
- To assess the level of action taken by community groups in identifying and addressing the issues brought about by the regeneration.
- To support community groups in identifying and articulating their needs within the context of the regeneration of Ballymun.
- To support community groups in having an active role in the regeneration process and the future of Ballymun.
- To research similar regeneration projects world-wide, examine community responses and disseminate ideas and learning from these projects to community groups in Ballymun.
- To make recommendations in co-operation with community groups on building a new social and community infrastructure for the Ballymun of the future.

In July 1998, Colm Hackett began work with CAP with responsibility for developing this project. The first step has been to undertake action-research aimed at meeting a number of the above objectives. This report is the result of this research.

During the research period, CAP has developed its own understanding of “consultation” and “community involvement” in regeneration processes. This report is an attempt to document this learning both for Ballymun and other communities that may be experiencing similar challenges. We would also like to share this learning with policy makers, deliverers of services, and social partners.

The principle of “community involvement” has been around for a while now and experiences are being gained and built upon. We found other communities that have undergone similar experiences, some of them good and some of them not so good. We looked at Ballymun, at similar projects in Dublin, Limerick and Newcastle and then we looked at Ballymun again. From these different experiences we have drawn together some of the good practices and some of the gaps, and have compared them to the experience in Ballymun.

The action-research at local level has been a process deeply committed to community development principles. (The methodology of the process is detailed in Chapter 6.) By this we mean that the research process itself aimed to support community groups in Ballymun to identify the challenges facing them arising from the regeneration and to begin to develop strategies to meet those challenges.

During the local research we conducted intensive interviews with over 50 groups in Ballymun, a sample that represents over a third of community activity in the area. With the assistance of these groups we have produced this report that makes a number of recommendations for now and for the future. These recommendations are being made to a variety of players – to local groups themselves, to BRL and Dublin Corporation, to all of the statutory agencies that have responsibility for the support and development of Ballymun and to Ministers and Government Departments where the “Future of Ballymun Buck” stops.

As a result of the action-research process that has produced this report, some changes and developments have happened at a community level. The process has assisted in the establishment of a network of community groups in Ballymun – Ballymun Community Organisations Network (BCON) - and the development of a cross-community vision for the future. We hope that this report will help to support groups to continue to develop collective responses to the regeneration of the area.

- It is recommended that community groups and statutory agencies in Ballymun come together with BRL to develop a team of Community Development Workers with the specific brief of facilitating community involvement in the regeneration process.
  
- It is recommended that criteria and guidelines for community consultation about, and involvement in, regeneration projects be developed and adopted as policy at central Government level and that the Department of the Environment and Local Government take the lead in this respect.
  
- It is recommended that these criteria and guidelines be based on the wealth of experience

and expertise already gained in communities like Ballymun and that they include mechanisms for measuring the effectiveness of consultation processes.

- It is recommended that local groups develop a collective response to address the challenges that community groups in Ballymun face either through a forum or a network that voices their needs and interests.
  
- It is recommended that community groups be proactive about communicating more with each other and agencies working in the area.
  
- It is recommended that BRL widen its current board and working group structures to include more Ballymun residents at decision-making levels.
  
- It is recommended that BRL inform community groups about, and include community groups in, the regeneration process in order to prevent oversights and keep groups informed enough to support the needs of the people who use their services.
  
- It is recommended that statutory bodies and agencies in Ballymun make clear statements of their future plans for investment in the area and do so as part of the integrated planning necessary for the potential of the regeneration programme to be fulfilled.
  
- It is recommended that each statutory agency recognise the increased workload for community groups that the regeneration has produced and that statutory agencies commit themselves to supporting and resourcing community groups in their efforts to address their own needs within the regeneration programme.

## The 1960s To The 1980s

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Ballymun was built during nine years from 1966 to 1974 as a response to a severe housing crisis in Dublin at the time. 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 Ballymun Housing Project was the quickest solution to the prevailing housing crisis and it cost the State £11 million to build. Even by 1960s standards, this was a very cheap for the supply of over 3,000 homes.

While the population of the area has fluctuated dramatically over time, by 1996 Dublin was once again experiencing a serious housing shortage and the population of Ballymun reached approximately 20,000 people.

The planning brief for the original Ballymun stated:

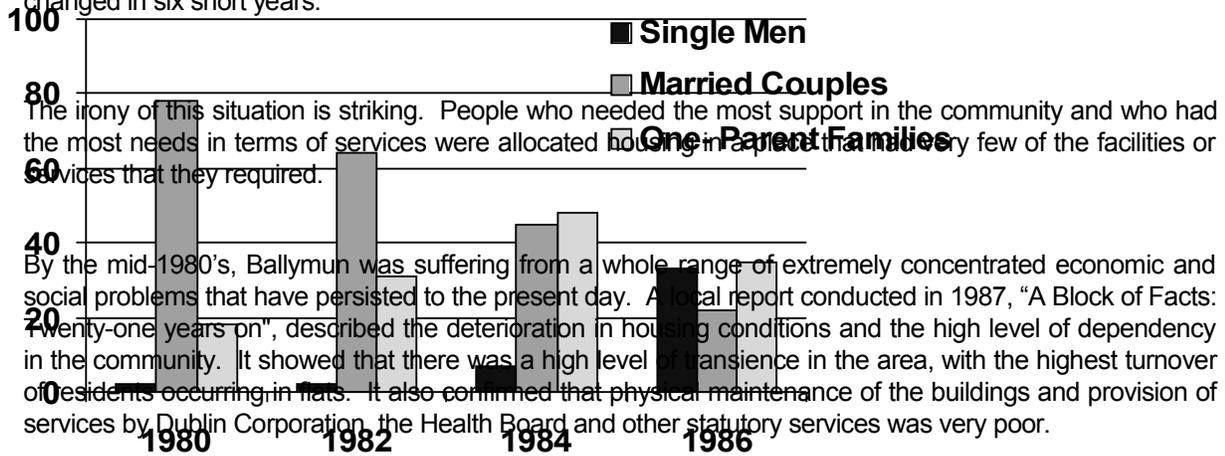
"The planning concept is that of a new and closely integrated community enjoying from the beginning all the facilities of a new small town. It is intended that the development within the site shall be treated as a community, virtually self contained with the exception of industry and playing fields and provided with all the shopping, community and primary school facilities. Sites for meeting rooms to hold small functions will be located throughout the housing areas together with surgeries for doctors and dentists. The shops will cover a wide range of needs and be of a regional character and the proposed community buildings will include meeting halls, dance hall, clinic, library, swimming pool, bowling alley and perhaps a small cinema."  
(Muldowney and Mulhall, 1975)

Unfortunately, little planning or thought went into *how* this 'integrated community' would be developed or paid for. In the event, most of the facilities envisaged above never materialised. While some did appear after extensive campaigning by the community (including running candidates in the national and local elections), by the early 1980's the general neglect and degeneration of Ballymun was leading to facilities in the area actually being withdrawn. For example, the Bank of Ireland closed its Ballymun branch in 1984.

The cause of the deterioration of Ballymun was a combination of policies and practices adopted by Dublin Corporation and Central Government. An extremely under-resourced Corporation maintenance regime and successive housing policies hit Ballymun with a double whammy. For example, in the early 1980s the Government introduced a "surrender grant" to encourage people to give up their local authority housing and transfer to private housing. The £5,000 grant made it possible for people with steady jobs to secure a mortgage and this encouraged all economically active and employed families to leave the area.

Between 1970 and 1990, Ireland was changing and one dramatic indicator of the change occurring was the changing makeup of Irish families. Families were becoming smaller and lone parenthood was becoming increasingly common. As the table below illustrates, in 1980 over 70% of lettings in Ballymun were to married couples. This sector of tenants dropped to 20% in the space of 6 years. Two main groups replaced the demand for lettings from married couples; the percentage of lettings to single men grew from

less than 5% in 1980 to over 50% in 1986 and lettings to lone parents increased from 18% in 1980 to 48% of new lettings in 1984. The make up of the majority of residents was radically changed in six short years.



The irony of this situation is striking. People who needed the most support in the community and who had the most needs in terms of services were allocated housing in areas where very few of the facilities or services that they required.

By the mid-1980's, Ballymun was suffering from a whole range of extremely concentrated economic and social problems that have persisted to the present day. A local report conducted in 1987, "A Block of Facts: Twenty-one years on", described the deterioration in housing conditions and the high level of dependency in the community. It showed that there was a high level of transience in the area, with the highest turnover of residents occurring in flats. It also confirmed that physical maintenance of the buildings and provision of services by Dublin Corporation, the Health Board and other statutory services was very poor.

Despite the fact that the facilities and services planned were never provided, Ballymun today has a wealth of community activity with almost 150 different voluntary and community groups operating in the area. These groups were established over many years by people living or working in the community in response to needs in the area.

## 1990s Ballymun

A 1997 Work Research Centre (WRC) socio-economic report illustrates the continuing high level of disadvantage among Ballymun residents. The study showed that, despite the innovative and ongoing plans and programmes already devised by agencies and organisations involved in the area, lone parenthood; the levels of educational attainment; unemployment; and disengagement from the labour force all still remain highly significant, as does the increase in size of the youth population. Some of the statistics gathered by the WRC indicate the widespread levels of poverty in Ballymun in 1997:

- 50% of the economically active are unemployed on the live register.
- 40% of the economically active participate in the labour force.
- 70% of households in corporation-rented homes depend on social welfare as their only source of income.
- 33% of the population is aged between 0 and 14.
- 55% of children leave school at or before 15 years of age.
- 1.2% of students from Ballymun go on to 3<sup>rd</sup> level education.
- 13% of people aged between 20 and 29 are opiate users.\*

\*Source: Foxe, (1999)

## The Remedial Works Scheme In Ballymun:

In 1988, Dublin Corporation announced a plan for the comprehensive refurbishment of Ballymun. This refurbishment was to be funded by the Remedial Works Scheme (see Chapter Two) and carried out over an 11-year programme.

Beginning in 1991 an extensive programme of local consultation was carried out. The consultation was

directed by the Ballymun Housing Task Force, a community based organisation established in 1985 by the Ballymun Community Coalition. Significantly, the Ballymun Housing Task Force was a very early example of a “partnership” between the local community and the state. Its membership included local people, Dublin Corporation officials, local members of the Dáil and statutory agency representatives.

The plan for the refurbishment of the estate was accompanied by efforts to develop structures for tenant participation in Housing Management. The tenant participation structures were based around the establishment of five Area Forums, made up of two representatives from each block of flats and one person from each road or courtyard of houses. The first phase of the refurbishment concentrated on 280 units in the Balbutcher Lane area of the estate, i.e. one 15-storey tower block and two 8-storey spine blocks of flats.

Craig Gardener Consultants completed an evaluation of the refurbishment in 1993. The evaluation recommended that further phases of the refurbishment of Ballymun should involve a mixture of demolition and new build of selected parts of the estate to facilitate the creation of an identifiable town centre.

The evaluation established that the first phase of the refurbishment was successful in tackling issues of security in Balbutcher Lane, but overall it did not tackle the basic structural defects or safety aspects of the blocks. In essence, the principal factor influencing the recommendations of the Craig Gardener report was concern over excessive costs of refurbishment of the blocks in comparison to the option of demolition and new build.

While the Craig Gardener report did not evaluate the tenant participation programme, it is generally agreed that it was successful in establishing comprehensive and democratic representative structures for residents of the Balbutcher Lane area. Some shortcomings of the tenant participation aspects of the refurbishment programme have been attributed to the haste with which the overall representative structure was established. It is generally agreed that the speed with which representative structures were set up was to the detriment of capacity-building work necessary to develop the skills of the Forums and their ability to involve a greater number of residents in the process. In addition, the lack of staffing and resources at the Ballymun Housing Task Force contributed negatively to the potential of the tenant participation programme.

## **The Regeneration Of Ballymun:**

In March 1997, the Government announced that it was setting aside £179million to fund the demolition of all the 15- and 8-storey blocks of flats in Ballymun and their replacement with conventional low-rise housing. A limited company, Ballymun Regeneration Limited (BRL), was formed by Dublin Corporation to prepare and implement a 'Masterplan' for the regeneration project.

BRL published its Masterplan in March 1998. The Plan was formulated as an "Integrated Area Plan" (IAP) and submitted for approval under the 1999 Urban Renewal Scheme (see Chapter 4) and it is therefore a comprehensive plan including housing, economic, environmental, social and community renewal proposals. However, the cost of implementing everything in this Masterplan for Ballymun is far in excess of the £179million allocated for housing renewal. While it is clear that full implementation of the Plan will require the commitment of far more resources by Government, statutory agencies and private enterprise, this message has not always been clearly received by local groups or residents.

## **Conclusion**

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The regeneration of Ballymun got underway just over thirty years after the decision to build the town. By the start of the 1990s, the Ballymun community had been responding to the problems in the area for more than two decades. For much of the 1970s and early 1980s, this work received little or no official recognition or support. Through local lobbying, projects were slowly established with funding from a variety of sources such as the Health Board, FÁS and Dublin Corporation. In the 1990s the Government began the process of targeting investment in areas that they designated as "disadvantaged". Ballymun was among the first 12 areas in the State to be thus designated.

The Ballymun community, in working to address local problems; in organising collectively in small groups and wider networks; and in lobbying and working with state agencies for decades; ensured that the Government would target their area for investment through the range of programmes that are being aimed at tackling poverty and disadvantage.

## **Introduction**

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The regeneration of Ballymun is currently the biggest project of its type in Ireland. This Chapter examines some of the precedents to this project in Ireland and in Europe. The purpose of doing so is to place the current regeneration of Ballymun within the context of lessons learned from similar projects in other areas.

Concerted attempts at rescue and regeneration of low cost "system built" local authority housing estates began in the 1980s with the Remedial Works Scheme. This scheme was focused on the refurbishment of buildings that had been constructed in response to public housing crises of the 1940s and 1960s. (Norris, 1999) Responsibility for planning and implementation of Remedial Works Schemes rested with the local authority in question and there was no obligation on the local authority to look beyond housing and services infrastructure as part of the Scheme.

The Remedial Works Scheme was supplemented by tax-driven Urban Renewal Schemes beginning in 1986, aimed at redevelopment of declining inner city areas. These began as incentives to private enterprise to invest in building housing and office space in inner-city areas. The early Urban Renewal Schemes were a mixture of tax benefits for developers willing to build in "designated areas" (e.g. Gardiner Street in Dublin) and enterprise-led projects entrusted to specially created development agencies such as the Custom House Docks Development Authority and Temple Bar Properties in Dublin.

The current regeneration of Ballymun is taking place in the context of the 1998 Urban Renewal Scheme (see Chapter 4 for details of this Scheme) which has developed on lessons learned from earlier Schemes and from abroad.

## **Local Authority Refurbishment In Ireland**

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In a study of social housing in Ireland, Norris (1999) identified some lessons from attempts at rescue in two local authority estates, Fatima Mansions in Dublin and Moyross in Limerick.

### **Fatima Mansions, Dublin:**

Fatima Mansions is located in Rialto on Dublins southside and is a Dublin Corporation owned high-rise public housing scheme built between 1949 and 1952. The Mansions consist of fifteen four-storey blocks of flats housing approximately 2,500 people.

A community worker was employed by the Fatima Development Group (FDG) from 1984-1987 and he established and liaised with Block Committees and developed liaison mechanisms with Dublin Corporation. In 1987, Dublin Corporation initiated a programme under the Remedial Works Scheme to refurbish the flats at an initial cost of £3.6million.

According to Kelleher et al (1992), tenants had a major input into the content of the refurbishment programme and the majority of their needs in terms of the physical environment were met. Norris (1999) concludes that the refurbishment of Fatima Mansions in Dublin is largely considered a failure among local residents and that this is tacitly agreed by Dublin Corporation officials. He contends that:

"The refurbishment of Fatima Mansions failed because it focussed narrowly on physical upgrading while the pressing problems of the estate were primarily social in character"

The conclusion drawn by Corcoran (1997) on the refurbishment of Fatima Mansions is that:

"...imposing solutions on tenants will not succeed. They must be allowed to participate fully if the problems, many of which are of a social nature, are to be tackled and ultimately resolved".

The approach taken by Dublin Corporation during the refurbishment of Fatima Mansions supports the contention that in local authority housing departments technical staff such as architects and engineers have traditionally been more influential than administrative grades. According to O'Connell (1999), one of the outcomes of the importance given to architects and engineers in local authority housing projects has been an excessive focus on "bricks and mortar" aspects of housing and a neglect of estate management and community development.

## **Moyross, Limerick:**

Moyross is a public housing scheme owned and managed by Limerick Corporation that consists of 1,160 houses grouped in eleven parks. The estate was built between the mid-1970s and the mid-1980s and parks were clustered together into several neighbourhoods one of these being Glenagross which comprises of four parks. In the late 1980's, serious disturbances erupted in Glenagross in the form of widespread disorder and vandalism that resulted in many houses being burned out and the area in general suffering severe stigmatisation.

In the mid-1990s, Limerick Corporation initiated a refurbishment programme under the Urban Renewal Scheme which sought to upgrade the housing in the area and to introduce new estate management structures and processes.

The experience of refurbishment in Glenagross was much more complex than in Fatima Mansions in that it combined large-scale physical upgrading with a thorough overhaul of Limerick Corporations management approach to the estate. The process was also supplemented by independent developments occurring in the estate. These were principally concerned with the provision of a new community centre and other facilities, which were mostly funded by sources other than Limerick Corporation.

The crucial differences between Glenagross and Fatima Mansions concerned the identification of issues beyond the physical and the variety of mechanisms for change that residents could have an input into. In Glenagross, these involved the inclusion of residents in devising the new estate management approach and the provision of facilities that actively addressed the needs and priorities of the residents themselves.

# Urban Regeneration Elsewhere In Europe

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The problems associated with large-scale public housing projects in cities are by no means unique to Ireland. In fact, the history of development of public housing in Ireland needs to be seen in the context of developments across Europe in order to understand why successive Irish Governments have chosen mass, suburban housing as the principal response to housing shortages in our cities and large towns.

In a major study of twenty public housing estates in fifteen European cities, Power (1997) explains that:

"European governments became enmeshed in urban housing problems through economic, social and electoral pressures. The war pushed that involvement to new limits, as chronic housing shortages swamped other issues. Governments ended up financing the building of thousands of large, concrete estates in cellular form. Rural to urban migration, slum development, public aspirations, and the development of industrial building systems led to a belief in gigantism and mass solutions, which in turn created unwieldy, heavily subsidised, separate housing areas that were designed for those in need. Gradually, as overall shortages diminished, the populations that could not realistically aspire to ever more popular, owner-occupied houses ... ended up often feeling trapped in, or coerced into, estates which were marginalised, stigmatised and rejected by mainstream society."

By the 1980s, it was clear that the most serious problems were showing up in urban public housing projects - flats complexes like Ballymun and large peripheral estates like Clondalkin and Tallaght. Governments across Europe, along with the European Union itself, have been devising and testing strategies to address these problems for more than thirty years now.

In her study, which looked at a whole range of strategies for urban regeneration, Power concluded that the best chance of rescue of seriously marginalised urban estates is to develop a response that rests within a framework including the following five elements:

- \* estates require a many-sided solution because their problems are many-sided;
- \* a local focus is necessary to create a viable operational base that is linked to the community, expanding the level of local activity and the quality of services;
- \* resident involvement and community stabilisation are essential parts of the improvements process;
- \* collective provision and outside support link estates to the wider community by closing some of the gaps caused by poverty;
- \* the role of government in mediating economic and social change is vital to anchoring vulnerable communities."

## **Tyne and Wear, North East England:**

In Britain, disadvantaged areas have a longer history than in Ireland of competing for funding to carry out regeneration projects. In the late 1980's, the Tyne and Wear Development Corporation (TWDC) developed an approach to local regeneration that was recommended by the adjudicating authority as a model of good practice. Subsequently, elements of the TWDC model have been adopted in successful bids by other areas around Britain.

Tyne and Wear is an area in the north-east of England. In the 1950s and 1960s, 30% of local employment was in traditional heavy industries particularly shipbuilding, mining and steel-making. By 1987 this employment sector had shrunk to just 1% of those at work. The TWDC was set up in 1987 to regenerate its designated area. The area stretched along 26 miles of river and about one third of it was derelict, polluted, or disused. The regeneration site surrounded, but specifically excluded, local communities with some of the highest indices of social and economic deprivation in the north-east of England. With communities excluded there was no community development strategy, no community development staff and any money available for liaison with residents was put towards "image support".

By its second year, the TWDC realised that its impact would be limited if it did not find a way to relate to local communities and it began to devise a community development strategy. The strategy included providing support and resources to local communities, building effective communication with community groups and the voluntary sector and informing and consulting with the community on major developments both in the planning and implementation stages. The TWDC employed staff with expertise in community development to implement the strategy.

Early attempts at consultation were poorly received until the TWDC moved towards a community-based approach. Community-based Monitoring Panels emerged as local communities realised how the regeneration would affect them. This demonstrated that it is never too late to start talking with community organisations or to create the means for dialogue.

The panels acted as pressure groups that put forward community priorities. When the first panel - the East Quayside Group - was set up, it considered that "*If local people could not influence the TWDC to change its policy, they could at least embarrass it into sticking to what it said it would do.*" (Russell, 1998) The TWDC recognised the Monitoring Panels and agreed on an area-based approach. A strategy of giving grants assumed a major role as a way of getting to know local groups, building trust and identifying priorities.

Starting as a piecemeal approach, grant-giving gave the Panels a larger role, directly or indirectly, affecting spending decisions and making an impact on the shape of developments. The Panels were clearly valuable in easing the physical disruption of development for people. The Panels gave the opportunity for allaying community concerns and nipping potential misunderstandings in the bud, while the TWDC needed to learn about local concerns and priorities.

While the Monitoring Panels were independent and important routes to influence, the TWDC ensured the Monitoring Panels were clear on their expectations and the limits of their power. The TWDC prioritised its physical regeneration objectives and the majority of its decisions were shaped by commercial considerations. Overall, the approach of the TWDC was radical and innovative in Britain for its time and has influenced the shape of community consultation during subsequent regeneration programmes.

# Conclusion

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There are a number of very important lessons emerging from the many European experiences of urban regeneration, including experiences in Ireland, that are re-iterated again and again in studies of the problem:

- It is vital that any regeneration programme grounds itself in the social and economic context of the area. Excessive focus on solely physical issues will not alter the underlying social and economic problems of an area.
- Any strategy for the regeneration of an area should be integrated with independent and complementary developments that are addressing the problems of an area.
- Physical refurbishment should be carried out in tandem with evaluation of the management approach to the estate. The management approach should be complementary and take account of the development of community facilities and community development strategies in the area.
- It is never too late to engage with community and voluntary groups. However, consultation is only an exercise if it does not address the actual problems of the area.
- Regeneration projects should include and develop a community development strategy as a specific objective and employ staff with expertise in community development to implement this strategy.
- Regeneration projects should facilitate dialogue between the community and agencies operating in the area.
- Supporting community activity is an excellent way of building trust and developing relationships between the community and the regeneration company.
- The community and the regeneration company need to be clear and honest about their limits and their expectations.

## Why Is Community Involvement Important?

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As outlined in the previous chapter, the lessons emerging from over thirty years of experience of urban regeneration efforts across Europe make it clear that "community involvement" is critical to the success of regeneration projects. This chapter examines in more detail why this is the case and takes a look at how much of the available learning has been taken on board by the authorities in Ireland.

A key feature in attracting refurbishment or redevelopment schemes to an area is often the level of social disadvantage being experienced by the area in question. Experience shows that the majority of areas targeted for regeneration or renewal exhibit high levels of social exclusion, and Ballymun certainly falls within this category of area.

When working in "disadvantaged areas", all of the experts are agreed that many-sided problems need many-sided solutions if regeneration is to be about changing the factors that make an area "disadvantaged" in the first place. Frazer (1996) points out that the process of social exclusion in disadvantaged areas not only impacts on individuals but also undermines the community's own infrastructure:

"Typically, disadvantaged communities experience growing demographic imbalances and economic, cultural and social isolation deepens over time. These factors combine with vulnerability and pressures on people living in the area to undermine the family, community and social support structures that most citizens take for granted. The effect of all this is to disempower disadvantaged communities and to curtail their ability to organise and address the problems they face."

Frazer goes on to argue that efforts to bring about regeneration in disadvantaged communities that do not address the fundamental reality of people's lives may very well increase people's experience of social exclusion and widen the gap between those who are poor and those who are well-off. This was considered to have been the case in Dublin's inner-city during the first stage of the process of regenerating the Custom House Docks which began with the establishment of the Custom House Docks Development Authority (CHDDA) under the Urban Renewal Act, 1986:

"It is generally recognised that, at the outset, when the vision for the CHDDA was created and the objectives for the CHDDA were set, the local community and their needs were not considered. Much has happened since then and some of the initiatives to redress this problem are described in Chapter 10. However, there has been little benefit to date from the redevelopment of the CHDA to the neighbouring communities in terms of employment, amenities and facilities. Unemployment has, during the same period, increased in Dublin's inner city. Social problems such as drugs, poor education attainments and marginalised communities remain."

(Study on the Urban Renewal Schemes", KMPG for the Department of the Environment, 1996.)

It is therefore crucial that a clear understanding of the needs and priorities of the local community is developed on an ongoing basis by the authorities. This means engaging in a meaningful process of consultation and dialogue with the community.

Fordham (1993) asserts that the overwhelming case for community involvement comes from the limitations built in to short-term public programmes that see themselves as temporary. In these cases, as noted by Chanan (1999):

“Many regeneration schemes have come and gone without leaving much permanent effect because actions were not embedded in the commitment and advancement of local residents”.

Thus, community involvement is much more than an abstract aspiration; community involvement and empowerment is a necessary condition of long-term social and economic change. For a disadvantaged area to actually undergo ‘regeneration’ beyond rebuilding the physical environment, the aim of building up the capacity of the majority of the local population to become involved must become a primary purpose and not just a side issue.

## **The Current Policy Context In Ireland**

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Involvement of local communities in planning and implementing programmes to tackle social and economic problems has become an increasingly focussed objective of European social and economic policy over the past 20 years. At the same time, Irish policy-makers have increasingly included recognition of the importance of local communities in their plans for development.

This has resulted in the inclusion of "community involvement" as an aspiration of a number of key Irish policy statements that provide the context in which the regeneration of Ballymun is taking place. These are outlined below.

### **The Urban Renewal Scheme 1998:**

As indicated above, in 1996 the Department of the Environment and Local Government (DoELG) published a study of the urban renewal schemes that had been in operation since 1986. The study was conducted by a consortium led by KPMG Management Consulting along with Murray O'Laoire Associates, Architects and Urban Designers and the Northern Ireland Economic Research Centre. In making recommendations for the future, this study states that:

"Urban renewal in Ireland has become inextricably linked to tax incentives. The problems facing declining urban areas go beyond physical issues such as dereliction and dilapidated building stock. Our recommendations for policy on urban renewal in the future are based upon the following as the concept of urban renewal:

Urban renewal must address the physical, economic, social and environmental regeneration and rejuvenation of urban areas having regard to the local situation, the overall situation and any individual conditions. As such, the diversity of issues urban renewal policy must address has led to our conclusion that, in the future, measures and programmes of renewal must be linked to area based integrated strategic

planning."

The study recommended that future urban renewal schemes should be based on plans that would be:

- Area-focussed, reflect the specific needs of the area, and take account of and address the positive and negative attributes of the area;
- Cross-sectoral in approach in order to integrate the development of a diverse range of sectors and groups. The key to integration will involve the identification of potential conflicts, if any;
- Involve the local community and representative groups in order to source at first hand local needs and strengths and ensure integration of these issues;
- Set measurable objectives and targets against which progress can be monitored, and
- Be realistic and implementable.

The DoELG issued the guidelines for the new urban scheme in November 1997. In the forward to these guidelines, the Minister for Housing and Urban Renewal explained that implementing the recommendations of the 1996 study meant that the new scheme was going to be different from what had gone before in a number of important respects:

"In general, the scheme will feature a much more focussed approach, targeting the remaining areas of need. It will also be a much more integrated scheme. While physical renewal will, of course, continue to be a central objective, it won't be the only one. The Government's National Anti-Poverty Strategy requires that future policy on urban renewal must take full account of the social needs in and effects on areas targeted for regeneration. It will therefore be an important objective under the new scheme to ensure that physical renewal contributes to social renewal."

The Minister goes on to say that:

"Again, the National Anti-Poverty Strategy requires that arrangements put in place must incorporate mechanisms to ensure that disadvantaged local communities and representative organisations and groups should participate fully in the planning and realisation of urban renewal programmes."

The Guidelines themselves give pointers for how local communities could be involved in consultation, participation and partnership in the development and implementation of an Integrated Area Plan (IAP) for their area:

"Local groups and residents should be encouraged to be stakeholders in the IAP, by ensuring that their local knowledge is utilised to best advantage and that issues of importance to them are seen to be addressed in the IAP. New consultative planning techniques such as 'design workshops' and 'planning for real' could be used to enhance the consultation process with community organisations. The possibility of providing support to community organisations to assist them in preparing inputs into IAPs should be considered."

In April 1999, the DoELG issued Monitoring Guidelines for the Urban Renewal Scheme that require each local authority or authorised company (BRL in the case of Ballymun) to establish a "cross-sectoral Monitoring Committee". These Guidelines also include pointers about community involvement in that they state:

"It is suggested that the Monitoring Committee should consist of a maximum of **nine** members comprising:

**Three** representatives of the local authority or authorised company and relevant urban district council or borough council, one of whom must be the senior official responsible for the implementation of the IAP. One of the representatives should be appointed Chairperson of the Monitoring Committee.

**One** Chamber of Commerce or similar business representative.

**One** Trade Council or similar representative.

**One** representative of architectural, historical, conservational interests.

**Three** community group representatives."

The functions of the Monitoring Committee, as spelt out in the Guidelines, are to:

- Monitor progress in achieving the objectives of the IAP;
- Establish performance indicators in relation to meeting the objectives of the IAP and against which progress can be measured;
- Identify and deal with problems or barriers which may arise and which are causing delay in the implementation of the process;
- Address any change in circumstances since the preparation of the IAP; and
- Respond to any unforeseen opportunities which may present themselves.

## **The National Development Plan 2000 – 2006:**

The National Development Plan has four Objectives underpinning its strategy for development over the period 2000 - 2006. These are:

- Continuing sustainable national economic and employment growth;
- Consolidating and improving Irelands international competitiveness;
- Fostering balanced Regional Development; and
- Promoting Social Inclusion.

The Plan commits the Government to "a multi-faceted approach to the promotion of Social Inclusion, including targeted interventions aimed at areas and groups affected by poverty and social exclusion throughout the community."

Ballymun is specifically mentioned as an area that will benefit from "Area -based regeneration initiatives to restore the fabric of established areas and to support local communities" as part of the National Development Plan.

In terms of how these initiatives are to be implemented, the Plan states that:

"Encouraging marginalised communities to help themselves by identifying their own problems and working towards their solution in a planned and integrated way with the agencies of the State, will be an essential element of the process."

## **The Programme For Prosperity And Fairness 2000 – 2003:**

The Programme for Prosperity and Fairness (PPF) is the latest in a series of agreements between the Government and the social partners (trade unions, employers, farmers and community and voluntary groups) that have been agreed on a 3-4 year basis since 1987. (Community and voluntary groups have only been included as "social partners" during the negotiations for the last two national Agreements.)

Overall, the PPF aims to:

- Keep our economy competitive in a rapidly changing world;
- Provide a strong basis for further economic prosperity;
- Improve the quality of life and living standards for all; and to
- Bring about a fairer and more inclusive Ireland.

In its objectives in relation to Urban Disadvantage, the PPF aims "to empower and support the involvement of local communities, in particular those affected by poverty and disadvantage, in the regeneration of their own areas."

Again, the regeneration of Ballymun is specifically mentioned as a commitment of the PPF in its section on "Social and Affordable Housing and Accommodation", and in this context the plans for development of estate management strategies are outlined:

"Measures to improve the management of Local Authority housing estates / flat complexes, including more effective participation by tenants and residents with the relevant Local Authorities, will be kept under review by the Department of the Environment and Local Government. An inter-agency approach will be adopted, building on the experience of the Integrated Services Process, to ensure that wider community development aspects are incorporated."

The PPF has a section specifically aimed at "Supporting Voluntary Effort and Participation" which includes the objective:

"To enhance the capacity of communities experiencing disadvantage (whether geographical or sectoral) to articulate their collective interests and to participate in community activity, in partnership with public authorities."

The PPF specifies the publication of the White Paper referred to below as one of the actions that will assist

in meeting the PPFs objectives in Supporting Voluntary Effort and Participation.

## **White Paper On A Framework For Supporting Voluntary Activity And For Developing The Relationship Between The State And The Community And Voluntary Sector:**

This White Paper, published in 2000 (it has been in the pipeline for almost a decade now), is a very important milestone in the development of the relationship between the State and people "on the ground". It spells out the current position of the Government in relation to supporting voluntary activity and the "community and voluntary sector" generally.

When referring to the "sector", the Paper is talking about the whole range of groups organising activity at local, regional and national level that is aimed at addressing social and economic problems. The feature that distinguishes the "sector" from other social partners such as trade unions or employers is that it has a not-for-profit basis and a great deal of its work is undertaken by volunteers.

The White Paper outlines a number of plans for developing the States support to, and relationship with, the community and voluntary sector. It acknowledges consultation with people who are to be affected by State programmes as vital to a good working relationship with the sector while spelling out that: *"It is the Government that is ultimately solely responsible for making key decisions on social and economic policy issues - no matter how extensive a process of prior consultation that may have taken place."*

The White Paper gives some clarity to the Governments view on the meaning of "consultation" with social partners:

"Consultation varies in form from simply informing people what government proposes to do (information) to various levels of empowerment (partnership, delegation, control) explicitly designed to involve those outside government in a decision.

The goal of the relationship between the State and the Community and Voluntary sector is to achieve the common aims of both Sectors, while respecting the separate roles and responsibilities of each. The relationship being outlined in this White Paper between the State and the Community and Voluntary sector will have due regard to the ultimate responsibility of the Government and the Oireachtas as decision-makers.

The difference between consultation, negotiation and decision-making must be acknowledged - the kind of relationship in which the sector and the State engage must 'fit the purpose' of the particular circumstances. Logistical problems associated with developing the relationship exist and both Sectors, from time to time, need to compromise. Both flexibility and realism are required."

Having said all that, the Paper goes on to commit the Government and each of its Departments to a set of Good Practice Standards in relation to four areas of operation - Funding (for community and voluntary groups), Consultation Mechanisms, Customer Service and Policy Review. In the context of this report, an important commitment being made in the White Paper is that:

"Each Department will assess whether or not its policies in relation to particular areas of Community and Voluntary sector activity are clearly stated and in which areas there is need for policy development. Departments will take a proactive approach to policy development and be open to new ways of providing services which respond to needs as identified at local community level."

## **Conclusion**

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Over thirty years experience and practice in terms of urban regeneration in Ireland and abroad has demonstrated that taking a purely "bricks and mortar" approach to derelict urban areas will not benefit the local community. The approach that is now underway in Ireland is to marry physical refurbishment with comprehensive plans for improving the quality of life in seriously disadvantaged communities.

In taking the "integrated" approach, all of the parties are agreed that it is vital to involve the local community itself in devising and implementing the plans to address local problems.

What is not clear in the statements of policy from the Irish State is how this "community consultation / empowerment / involvement / participation" can or should be done. Chapter Four looks at this question in some detail.

## Introduction

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As detailed in previous chapters, consultation with, and involvement of, local communities is a frequently stated objective of Irish policy initiatives. It is a centrally placed objective of current urban renewal efforts and mechanisms for how it should happen are suggested in both the Planning and Monitoring Guidelines for the 1999 Urban Renewal Scheme.

In practice however, the absence of detailed guidelines for how to conduct community consultation or how to foster effective community participation leave the meaning of the exercise unclear and open to interpretation for each project and by each of the stakeholders in a project.

For example, Lee (1996) cites an example from Clydebank in Scotland where a committee of councillors, tenants and housing officials was established to encourage and develop tenant participation. At the beginning, members were asked the following question: "You have been invited to take part in a subgroup to encourage and develop tenant participation in your locality. Your main role is:

- To provide tenants with general information?
- To consult with tenants before decisions are made?
- To involve tenants in housing policy development and provision of services?"

The comparison of how each of the member groups defined what tenant participation means is striking:

- The councillors defined tenant participation as providing tenants with information about council policy;
- The majority of housing officials thought it meant consulting tenants before decisions were made;
- The tenants saw participation as being involved in decisions about housing policy and the provision of services.

This example illustrates a very common problem shared by local authorities and communities in disadvantaged areas in that the key stakeholders usually have no common or collectively agreed understanding of community participation or of community consultation. As referred to by the White Paper on Supporting Voluntary Activity, there is a range of types of "consultation" in use in a variety of contexts. This does allow for flexibility in developing consultation processes for particular situations. However, it also allows for grave misunderstandings between people that come together on projects with very different expectations of what their, and other peoples, involvement is actually about. In terms of "community involvement" in urban regeneration schemes, such misunderstandings can and do lead to serious conflict and frustration.

# Types of Community Involvement

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In local regeneration projects, defining community involvement is a task to be negotiated between the decision-makers and the communities they work with and each community needs to set out its own priorities in terms of community involvement. In general however, community involvement can be broadly divided into two types:

- Firstly, there can be *vertical participation*, meaning that representative structures are established to allow community involvement in decision-making. The aspect of this type of participation that needs to be negotiated is the level that community representatives occupy in the hierarchy of influence, because this will decide how much power the community has in making decisions.
- Secondly, there can be *horizontal participation*, meaning there are opportunities available to the wider community - other than the elected or appointed representatives of the community - to participate in the redevelopment of their area.

## Vertical Participation:

Arnstein (1969) describes a range of levels at which community participation operates and sets them out in a 'ladder of participation' that runs from what he calls "cosmetic" to "authentic". According to Arnstein, the authenticity (or reality) of participation is dependent on the answers to a number of key questions:

- Does the community have a voice?
- Does the community have the right to be heard?
- Is the community included in an advisory capacity or does it have the right to decision-making power?
- Is the community in the minority or in the majority at decision-making level?
- Is community decision-making power dependent on the consent of the power-holders?
- Does the community have the right to draw up its own priorities and the priorities for the regeneration programme?
- Does the community have control over finances?

Arnstein argues that:

"Participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless. It allows the power-holders to claim that all sides were considered, but it makes it possible for only some of the sides to benefit. Essentially it maintains the status quo."

In Arnstein's view, levels of participation range from manipulation at worst to citizen control at best. He sets eight different levels out in what he terms a "Ladder of Participation" as summarised in the following pages.

This form of participation usually consists of advisory or rubber stamp committees. These committees are made up of groups who are normally already established and it is generally recognised that they should be consulted. Frequently membership is confined to elements of the community that are compliant or seen as worthy to participate. The common experience is that they are called upon in the name of consultation to endorse projects. A further step, but not much better is when members find themselves to be educated, persuaded or advised by the officials in the way to see or approach things, rather than the other way around. This form of participation is really a public relations exercise for the power-holders. Bombarded with information participants rarely find they are in a position to ask questions.

This should be on the lowest rung of the ladder. It is arrogant and offensive. It sees the community as being the root of the problem. Those who do not agree with the expertise of the planners must have something wrong with them. This perspective sees individuals or communities as dysfunctional rather than a product of a dysfunctional society. An example of this is a perceived problem with litter/ graffiti (environmental degradation). A group may be set up to help tenants clean up the community. This kind of approach places the blame for the problems on the community and, more importantly, it diverts the attention of the community activist away from serious structural issues such as the poor planning of open and communal spaces. In reality tenants are giving up time and energy and saving the corporation money. They should be paid for their time, or they should be able to use this type of effort as a bargaining chip in order for the corporation to tackle greater problems. However, common experience is if withdrawal of participation is threatened, the corporation will report that, despite their best efforts to encourage participation, the community was non co-operative and difficult.

Informing citizens of their rights and responsibilities is the first and most important step towards legitimate citizen participation. In practice it is frequently found that too much emphasis is placed on one-way information flows – from officials to citizens - with no channel for feed back and no power for negotiation. Information is provided at a very late stage in planning, most of the important decisions have been taken and only token changes can be made. Means of communication are also mainly one way, e.g. exhibitions, posters, pamphlets or responses to enquiries. At the later stages in the planning process citizens are discouraged from asking difficult questions as the plans are integrated and even simple questions become complex issues masked in technical language and ideas.

Again a legitimate step towards citizen power, ironically however this step on the ladder has been called “participation in participation”. This is because the usual means of consultation is through attitude surveys, neighbourhood meetings and public hearings. Although the participants have a voice there is no guarantee that they will be heard or heeded. The results of this organised form of consultation is that people become statistical abstractions, the success of the consultation process is gauged by the amount of people who bring home brochures, turn up at public meetings or answer a questionnaire. One problem with questionnaires is that although most respondents would be in favour of a particular project, it is often the case that they will not be aware of any other options.

Otherwise known as “maximum feasible participation”, members of the community are taken onto management boards. If they are not accountable to the constituency in the community their representativeness can be undermined. In addition, if they hold the minority of seats in the management committee they can be easily outvoted. Citizens may be allowed to plan or advise as much as they like but the officials retain the power to officiate over the plans. It is up to the officials to judge whether the proposals put forward by the community are legitimate or feasible.

Partnership means that power is redistributed through negotiation between citizens and power-holders. They agree to share planning and decision-making responsibilities through such structures as joint policy boards, planning committees and mechanisms for resolving impasses. Once these structures are in place they cannot be changed by either side without the consent of the other side. This kind of partnership is most effective when there is an organised community power-base which is accountable to the community (i.e. depends solely on the community for legitimacy and support), when the group has the resources to pay its leaders reasonable compensation for their time and effort, and when the community has the power to hire and fire its own technicians, lawyers and community organisers. With this the community has some genuine control and bargaining power.

Delegated power is citizens having a dominant negotiation position vis-à-vis officials in planning and implementing a plan or program. This can be identified when the community holds the majority of seats on joint planning boards or similar structures. In this scenario the community can veto contentious issues until they are resolved in their favour. The community has control over the budget as well as choice of its own consultants and planning staff and the budget to pay them. At this level the strength of the community can ensure that any plans are fully accountable to them.

This is the top rung of Arnstein’s ladder of participation. It contains elements from the previous three rungs of the ladder, such a dominant negotiation position for the community, control over the allocation of resources and choice of consultants including their employment and termination. The significant difference is there is no intermediary body with control over the community’s access to funding. Citizens have control of the program from start to finish and this arrangement cannot be changed by anybody outside the community. The main constraint on this type of organisation is the lack of funding they receive. While the community may have control, they do not have the resources to carry their plans out fully or are underfunded resulting in a watered down version of their original aspirations.

Essentially, Arnsteins Ladder is based on an analysis of the power relationship that exists or is developed between residents and the authorities. The more power that residents have in deciding what is needed for their area and in having those needs met, the more “authentic” the level of participation by residents.

## **Horizontal Participation:**

Horizontal participation means the involvement of local people in groups and organisations addressing local needs. It means the involvement, in turn, of these groups and organisations in local or wider networks and forums that feed into the available vertical participation structures relevant to the regeneration of the area.

As shown in Arnsteins Ladder, the ongoing development of horizontal participation by local people is essential for effective vertical participation to be possible at all. Without direction from - and accountability to - a wide variety of groups involving a large proportion of residents, community representatives on planning boards run the risk of manipulation to an agenda decided by the power-holders and of taking the blame from residents for anything that is believed locally to have gone wrong.

## **Community Involvement – The Ideal**

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In a handbook written for the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, Chanan (1999) undertook to summarise the "Best Practice" lessons from extensive European research over ten years. This has resulted in a handbook setting out the reasons and the mechanisms for local community involvement in regeneration schemes.

Chanan defines "community involvement" as meaning that

“...a large proportion of local residents:

- \* Are involved in their own local organisations and initiatives;
- \* Know what is being planned for their locality by the authorities and have mechanisms for influencing this and for being represented in decision making;
- \* Are confident that development budgets are being used to best effect and that the population of the locality as a whole will benefit;
- \* Cooperate actively with official schemes, investing their own voluntary labour, and adapting their organisations or taking new initiatives of their own to add value;
- \* Feel ownership of what is achieved by a development scheme and therefore preserve and enhance it.”

Thus, effective community involvement is a combination of good horizontal and vertical participation as outlined above. Indeed, vertical participation is only as effective as the horizontal participation that is supporting it.

# Achieving The Ideal

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In his study of projects across Europe, Chanan found that many regeneration schemes have failed to engage community involvement because they have tried to jump to advanced forms of involvement while ignoring the context of the underlying community activity and conditions. This happens when community involvement strategies are based on drawing a few "typical" local people into the project. To take this approach requires a number of skilled and confident community leaders who are able to work at numerous levels, but even then such leaders cannot participate meaningfully unless there is some specific structure linking them to the mass of residents.

Experience across Europe has found that, while individuals and groups in the community come and go from time to time, the community sector as a whole is a permanent feature of local life:

"The community sector has been found to be larger, longer lasting and more influential in the life of the locality than was realised either by the policy makers or the public themselves."

In describing how to promote effective community involvement in regeneration schemes, Chanan named a number of essential components that can be summarised in the following way:

## 1. The Community Involvement Objective:

Chanan asserts that:

"It is essential that a development scheme should adopt a specific objective of strengthening the community sector alongside its physical, economic and environmental objectives. This is not only to help the other objectives. It is an authentic objective in its own right."

This is because:

"The starting point for effective community involvement is to recognise that involvement in an official scheme is the visible peak of a much deeper and wider phenomenon, namely community activity in general. Factors such as a wide spread of community organisations; skilled participants; well-informed representatives; and enterprising community leaders constitute a healthy community sector. These can contribute to advanced forms of involvement, but behind each of these lies a period of development.

Therefore, community involvement cannot be simply secured as a preparatory element to a regeneration scheme, neither can it be fixed at the level of those people who were easy to contact for the first consultation, meaning that the majority of the population never becomes involved. It is important to broaden out involvement strategies to explore how the whole of the local population can be engaged, to

develop a community vision and strategy for the inclusion of the most disadvantaged alongside a strategy for the involvement of the most able."

Thus, the objective of "Community Involvement" should be written into regeneration programmes through negotiation with the community sector. Performance indicators should be agreed and monitored over the time to the programme in the same way as other objectives, such as physical renewal of housing, are stated and planned and monitored.

## **2. The Community Involvement Programme:**

Chanan makes it clear that promoting effective community involvement is a big job that needs two kinds of resources:

" firstly, **a dedicated team of workers** for whom this is the primary task; secondly, assistance from many of the **professionals and specialists who are already working in the locality** on social issues, whether for the local authority or other agencies. The private sector too – locally based companies, shops and small businesses - can all play their part"

A programme that aims to actively engage local residents - including the most the most excluded people locally - will have to tackle several different levels of need and potential at the same time:

- "Individuals need a variety of pathways and activities available for their development. Some of these pathways need to be provided by public services; others need to be provided by the local community sector.
- To play their part in providing these expanding pathways, local groups and organisations need to improve their practice and increase their resources.
- To improve practice and increase resources, groups and organisations need the help of networks; umbrella groups; grants and endowments; and professional agencies.
- Networks in turn need more effective member groups and individuals in order to be able to facilitate lateral development and speak for the local sector."

Chanan points out that many existing regeneration schemes put into effect only parts of a community involvement strategy. He points out that :

"Many existing development schemes have put into effect only fragments of community involvement. To mobilise across the sector also requires a change in style of the work of existing agencies and professionals. Whilst this would involve scores of personnel in a locality of 10,000 to 20,000 people, most of it would not require new financial resources. Teachers, doctors, health workers, housing officers, religious leaders, business people and charity workers can all contribute by fostering autonomous local organisations wherever relevant to their work and by linking up with other agencies to create a more cooperative, holistic approach to local area problems. Many professions already have their own trend in this direction, because community involvement is essential to most public services just as it is to local development schemes. However, the presence of a specialist community involvement team in the locality which can guide them will greatly enhance the combined effect of these contributions."

Building the capacity of local people and organisations to participate will enable the community to develop its own vision for the future and to negotiate with the authorities for their support in attaining this vision.

### **3. The Community Involvement Team and Resources:**

In terms of the "specialist involvement team", the recommendation being made by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions is that:

"A locality of 10,000 residents has a potential for generating several scores of small organisations and initiatives, each needing help with development and effectiveness. A team of at least four to six full-time workers would be required to engender major advances in involvement over a period of three to five years. A rule of thumb figure for the proportion of a schemes total resources that should be allocated to the community involvement task would be about 10%. This would be needed firstly to pay for the team of specialist workers and secondly to provide grants and assistance direct to the local community organisations."

It is already the case that in Britain, localities that are competing for Government funding for urban regeneration projects are required to allocate up to 10% of their proposed project budget to community involvement activities and strategies. This is in recognition of the importance of investing in people when undertaking attempts at regenerating disadvantaged communities.

### **4. The Community Involvement Guidelines:**

As has already been mentioned, successive studies of what works in urban regeneration initiatives have identified a number of key factors that support sustainable development. One of these is community involvement, a second and equally important factor is Government backing for the project as a whole. In recognition of the complexities of devising appropriate community involvement strategies in each new project, and the tensions that can be caused by conflicting understandings of the concept among the different players in a locality, the European Foundation highly recommends that guidelines for community involvement in regeneration schemes be adopted at government level in each of the European States. The guidelines should be based on the best practices identified across Europe over the past 20 years.

In this context, it is interesting to note that the British Government have commissioned the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (which has long experience in testing solutions to urban problems) to produce a set of guidelines for good community involvement in urban regeneration projects. These guidelines very much reflect the thinking at European Foundation level and are reproduced in full as an Appendix to this report.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation guidelines also provide practical suggestions for how to engage with residents in disadvantaged areas, as does the handbook produced by the European Foundation. While both make it clear that every community is different there are important common experiences that provide the basis for general good practice guidelines.

# Conclusion

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"Community involvement" in regeneration programmes is a clear objective of Irish Government policy. There is a lack of clarity, however, about what community involvement means and how it might be achieved or measured.

There is a large body of experience and research across Europe and further afield that concludes that:

- Good community involvement in decision-making structures requires a strong and organised local community sector.
- Development of the local community sector requires time, resources and the political will of the authorities responsible for regeneration programmes.
- There are well-documented cases of good practise in the development and promotion of community involvement in regeneration programmes that have yielded guidelines that can be adapted at local level. Four factors have been found to be essential to both developing effective community involvement and deriving maximum benefit from community involvement:
  - a) Inclusion of "community involvement" as an objective of the regeneration project in its own right.
  - b) Design and implementation of a community involvement strategy at local level.
  - c) Sufficient resources to employ specialist community involvement staff and to provide for community involvement projects.
  - d) Support and guidance from central Government.

## **Introduction**

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As outlined previously, the job of regenerating Ballymun was delegated by Dublin Corporation to Ballymun Regeneration Limited (BRL), a company established, owned and staffed by the Corporation.

In its Masterplan, BRL states its recognition "of the vital role which existing groups and organisations have to play" in the regeneration process. It also recognises that "it is unwise to rely for public consultation solely on formal structures and groups and is aware that the wider community needs to be offered a range of opportunities to engage in the process." (Masterplan for the new Ballymun, 1997)

### **Consultation Structures:**

The first structure to be established in 1997 was the board of directors for Ballymun Regeneration Limited. The board of BRL, currently consisting of 16 people, is based on a now-familiar 'partnership' model. It is made up of representatives of statutory agencies, community and voluntary organizations, along with staff, a representative of Dublin City University and local politicians. The representation of the Ballymun community on the board of BRL includes 2 representatives from Women In Local Development (WILD), 2 from the Ballymun Housing Task Force (both community based organisations) and 1 from the Ballymun Partnership, a locally-based development company. Of these people, 3 are local residents.

BRL has also established a Monitoring Committee as required by the 1999 Guidelines from the Department of The Environment and Local Government. There are two community representatives on the Monitoring Committee, both of whom are also members of the board of BRL and residents of Ballymun.

The Ballymun Housing Task Force is the Government-appointed liaison body between residents and BRL. Consultation between residents and BRL is carried out through the Housing Task Force and the Five Area Forums first established as part of the refurbishment programme of the early 1990s. People from each Area democratically elect their Forum representatives. The Housing Task Force has the brief of providing technical assistance and developmental support to the Forums along with facilitating their dialogue with BRL.

### **Consultation Strategies:**

A major priority for BRL from the time it was set up was to secure the Urban Renewal Scheme for Ballymun. This objective decided the deadline for the production of the Masterplan. Inevitably, the short six-month timescale for submission of applications placed limitations on the amount or type of community consultation and/or dialogue about the Masterplan that could be undertaken.

During the six months between October 1997 and March 1998, BRL employed DH Regeneration, a London-based firm of consultants, to develop both once-off and ongoing strategies for consultation between

BRL and the community. These strategies are outlined below.

- A "Planning for Real" day, which took place on the 29<sup>th</sup> of November 1997 in the Ballymun Shopping Centre and was attended by approximately 2,000 people. A model of the estate was available at this event and the visitors were able to identify their preferred planning and design choices for the estate with the help of this model. A large display of suggested solutions to the economic, health, crime and housing problems of the estate were also provided at this event and visitors were able to identify their preferred solutions to these problems with the aid of stickers.
- A number of public information meetings were held for residents of the areas adjoining Ballymun in January and February 1998.
- On the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of March 1998 the draft Masterplan, accompanied by detailed models and computer-generated pictorials, was put on public display at the BRL offices. Approximately 5,000 people visited this display.
- Public meetings have been held at various times between the architects and tenants affected by the various phases of the demolition.
- A number of questionnaires were issued at various times. Some of these surveys were carried out in conjunction with other events such as the "Planning for Real" day, the Masterplan display and the public meetings. Other surveys targeted specific groups such as children on the estate who participated in a survey about play, and community groups that were surveyed about their need for premises as part of the "Neighbourhood Centres" envisaged in the Masterplan.
- Residents of the areas that are to be demolished first were individually visited at their homes and invited to meet with BRL to view and express a preference for 3 or 4 possible house designs, different locations and options like type of garden.
- Drop-in information clinics about house design and elements of the Plan were held on a weekly basis between November 1997 and March 1998 in Ballymun Shopping Centre.
  
- A newsletter, "Ballymun Regeneration News", is delivered to every home on a bi-monthly basis.
- Six Focus Groups were set up in October 1997 to discuss the following areas in detail:
  - Children and Youth.
  - Training and Education.
  - Employment and Economic Development.
  - Advice, Support and Community Development.
  - Leisure, Sport and Recreation.
  - Health and Physical Environment.

- These Focus Groups were made up of representatives of the Area Forums and representatives of community groups. The Focus Groups each nominated representatives to a Design Group that met a number of times with architects that were drafting the Masterplan. In mid-1998, the Groups were wound down and amalgamated into three Working Groups focussing on:

Education and Training.

Housing.

Economic Development.

Many of the community groups who had participated in the Focus Groups remained members of the Working Groups. Additional members for the Working Groups were drawn from a range of sources, such as statutory agencies and third level institutions. The Working Groups are chaired by independent experts and are charged with producing detailed plans for the development of services and policies relevant to their area of work.

- BRL conducts 2 public meetings with tenants for each section of development – one at the beginning and the second at the end of the design process.
- BRL calls together “Community Consultative Panels” made up of Area Forum representatives and residents from areas adjoining Ballymun when plans for development close to adjoining areas are being formulated.
- Architects from BRL conduct workshops with the Area Forums to look at designs for houses as each new phase is being planned.
- Tenants are invited by BRL to “Allocations Meetings” where they are shown where their new houses will be and are introduced to their prospective neighbours.
- BRL have contracted the National College of Ireland and the Community and Family Training Agency to provide tenants who are to be re-housed with a Housing Transition training programme.
- BRL have continued from time to time to employ consultants to develop specific plans for particular sectors, e.g. sports and leisure. Part of BRLs brief to all of the consultants it employs includes consulting with local groups and residents.
- BRL organises various “study trips” to investigate a particular subject such as “Tenant First” strategies in Belfast. Community groups with a particular interest in the subject in question have been facilitated to take part in these trips.
- BRL staff are directly involved in a number of initiatives such as work to establish a Community Law Centre, a Youth Safety Awareness Campaign and a Ballymun Oral History project.

## **The Question Of Power**

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In a case study for an unpublished Masters Thesis about community sustainability by Adams et al (1999), questions are raised about the appropriateness of the structures established in the formation of BRL. The researchers contend that ‘control’ is the key word in understanding these structures and, that while conducting interviews with the major players in the regeneration of Ballymun, the word *control* was continually used by BRL officials and officials of Dublin Corporation.

BRL is wholly owned by Dublin Corporation which receives its funding through the Department of the Environment and Local Government. The funding for the regeneration programme is channelled from the DoELG through Dublin Corporation. The awarding of Urban Renewal Schemes is negotiated through and decided by the DoELG.

In addition, the DoELG has appointed the Ballymun Housing Task Force to a liaison role between the residents of Ballymun and BRL. The Ballymun Housing Task Force receives its funding through the EU URBAN programme and Dublin Corporation, the latter again funded by the DoELG.

The ultimate responsibility for the shape and future of the regeneration programme lies with the Cabinet who are steered in this by the Minister and Department of the Environment and Local Government. In the Ballymun situation, this poses major problems for the expression of an independent voice or critical stance by the community because much of the funding for the "major (community-based) players" is at the discretion of the Department with the final say about what happens in Ballymun.

It could be argued that keeping everything relating to the regeneration under the control of one Department represents a streamlined management structure and will make for smoother decision-making processes. This was not the case in relation to the Urban Renewal Scheme, however, where BRL had to compete for the scheme along exactly the same lines as other areas despite the Departments clear responsibility for maximising the potential benefits of the Ballymun regeneration programme.

## **Ballymun Area Forums:**

It is evident from their approach to consultation that BRL have adopted some of the practices developed by the TWDC in Tyneside, particularly in relation to the use of the five Ballymun Area Forums. However, as already mentioned, the Forums in Ballymun were established during the Remedial Works Scheme for the purpose of tenant participation in estate management.

While some success was achieved in establishing an overall democratic structure, the Forums have been hindered by a lack of capacity-building to carry out the task in hand. In addition the Area Forums are under-supported as a result of the shortage of personnel in the Housing Task Force that, in turn, has been under-resourced for the work it has been delegated to do.

When BRL was established the Area Forums were similar to the monitoring panels established in Tyneside in that they were area-based and representative and the authorities saw them as the appropriate vehicle for consultation. The Area Forums, however, already had a job in hand - i.e. developing estate management systems for their neighbourhoods. Unlike the experience in Britain, tenant participation in estate management is a relatively new policy direction with few precedents in the Irish Republic. The Area Forums were already under pressure to cope with devising an estate management system here in Ballymun when the regeneration project began. When BRL decided that the Area Forums would be the vehicle for liaison between BRL and the local community, they imposed a new and gigantic task on the Forums who were already ill-equipped and unprepared to cope with the challenge in hand.

In Ballymun there is another crucial difference from Tyneside where the initial monitoring panels emerged out of the local realisation of the effect of redevelopment in their areas. Residents of Ballymun did not undergo this process. This has led to a confusion of purpose, between estate management and regeneration, for the Ballymun Area Forums that has benefited neither the process of developing structures for estate management or conducting consultation with local people in relation to the regeneration.

The pressures that are now burdening the Area Forums are further exacerbated by an almost complete absence of resources for their work. While Dublin Corporation are making moves to provide the Forums with office space and administrative facilities, their enormous workload has to date been undertaken on a totally voluntary basis meaning that elected Forum members get no financial compensation for the effort and energy they contribute for the benefit of the local community.

## Planning “For Real”:

Skeltcher et al (1996) argue that the limitations of "planning for real" exercises must be recognised. Planning for real exercises are short-term and once-off consultation mechanisms that are only effective if used as a complement to, rather than a replacement for, ongoing community involvement implemented on a partnership basis.

Public days, exhibitions, and launches have been used by BRL to keep the public informed, planning for real exercises were also carried out at these events. Adams et al (1999) found that people were very frustrated by the lack of a chance to express an opinion other than to agree/disagree or tick yes/no at these events. They ask the question "is it any wonder that 100% of those surveyed answered 'yes' to: *We need somewhere where young people can meet safely?*"

BRL also uses newsletters (dropped to every household) as a way of keeping people in touch with events and the progress of the Masterplan. In the first phase of the programme, 100 "loose fit" houses (i.e. houses not already allocated for replacement housing) were to be built and residents were invited to take part in a lottery for these houses. Newsletters, posters and advertisements in local newspapers were used to distribute information about the lottery. The fact that only 100 people filled out a lottery form for the "give-away" houses may indicate peoples scepticism that the regeneration will happen at all, or it may indicate that the newsletter is not as effective an instrument for disseminating information as BRL believes.

## Being Listened To Or Being Heard:

BRL is very public in its assertion that community groups and local people have had a significant contribution to the development of the Masterplan. Indeed, community involvement was specifically noted by the Department of Environment and Local Government as a factor influencing the granting of Urban Renewal designation to the Plan.

The Masterplan itself was drawn up and completed in six months meeting the deadline for the Urban Renewal Scheme on the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 1998. The completed Masterplan was presented to the community on the 7<sup>th</sup> and the 8<sup>th</sup> of March 1998. The publication of the Plan attracted over 5,000 interested people who were issued with a questionnaire about what they thought of the Plan. These questionnaires were an exercise of the type described by Adams et al above – people were asked whether they agreed that the Plan was a good one.

The “draft” Masterplan that people were looking at on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of March is a massively detailed, full-colour, high-quality document. It was not any kind of “draft” any local person had seen before and naturally people took it to be the Plan. (In fact, no revisions have subsequently been made to this document, it is circulated as the Masterplan for Ballymun.)

Because people were not equipped with either town planning or architectural skills, and because they were not asked to, there was effectively no mechanism or opportunity for the community to tease out exactly what this Plan meant. As noted by the Friends of the Irish Environment, *“what went on instead was a series of meetings - not designed to investigate alternatives but simply to enlist support for an already determined proposal”*. (Irish Times 9<sup>th</sup> May 1999)

The reply by BRL to this criticism is that the Masterplan is merely a framework document and is flexible in its implementation. However, when questions are raised about progress of different aspects of the regeneration, community representatives are directed back to the Masterplan. This has left community

organisations confused about the current status of the Plan and wondering is it set in stone or not.

The detailed design of individual neighbourhoods is an evolving process. BRL regularly conducts meetings with tenants of flats to be demolished and areas where houses are to be built. At these meetings, residents are presented with outline plans of houses and streets that they are not actually equipped to evaluate. This leaves people with little opportunity for raising questions or objections. The only clear route for doing so at the present is through the Planning Appeals process and a number of tenants are using this process because they believe it to be their only option in terms of being heard.

## **Integrated Planning:**

Ballymun is a densely populated urban town. All of the state agencies responsible for public welfare have a role and responsibilities in the area. Many of them – i.e. Dublin Corporation, FÁS, the Department of Social Community Family Affairs, the Gardaí, the Eastern Regional Health Authority (ERHA), the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee – have a physical presence and personnel in the area.

While each of these agencies has an important stake in the future of Ballymun, none of them have made public statements of their plans for development of their services as part of the regeneration process. Essentially, the job of developing a vision for the new Ballymun is being left solely to BRL despite the variety of stakeholders in the area.

At present, there is no forum for co-ordination of the work of the various agencies specifically in relation to the regeneration. The agencies are working together in a variety of partnerships such as the Local Drugs Task Force and the Ballymun Partnership and are represented on BRLs Working Groups. However, these Working Groups do not have the final say about the Plans for regeneration, this responsibility lies with the board of BRL. The only statutory agencies represented on the board are the ERHA and Dublin Corporation.

While all of the agencies provide supports of various kinds to local community and voluntary groups, there is no formal mechanism for integration of the efforts by statutory agencies to support local community and voluntary activity. More importantly in the context of the regeneration, there is no mechanism for discussion between the agencies and the groups that they support about the long-term future of Ballymun.

At some point, BRL will be closing up shop. As things stand, the community groups and the agencies that will be the ones who Ballymun need to flourish in the aftermath of the rebuilding programme are not getting together to look at their mutual future.

## **Community Involvement:**

Avenues for community involvement in the regeneration process in Ballymun to date can be summarised as follows:

- There are 3 local residents and 2 further representatives of community-based organisations on the 12-member board of BRL. There are two local residents on the Monitoring Committee. There are no structures or resources for accountability of these representatives back to the community beyond the groups that they have been drawn from.
- There are Five Area Forums that have regular contact with BRL but have been hampered

by a lack of clarity to their role and severe under-resourcing of their work.

- Residents can attend meetings, public information days, training programmes and drop-in clinics as organised by BRL from time to time.
- Community groups can be invited to participate in working groups and study trips set up by BRL from time to time.
- Community groups can be invited to take part in Working Groups from time to time.
- Residents of adjoining estates and Area Forum representatives can be invited to take part in Community Consultative Panels from time to time.
- Consultants employed by BRL to undertake particular planning briefs from time to time are instructed to consult with community groups.
- Residents receive a bi-monthly newsletter updating them on progress of the regeneration programme.
- BRL offices are open to the public to drop in at any time if they have questions or concerns.

## **Conclusion**

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BRL have clearly broken new ground in terms of the Irish experience of community involvement in regeneration schemes. A considerable amount of BRLs work is going into a wide variety of mechanisms for engaging with the local community on an ongoing basis

However, despite the fact that Ballymun has a huge variety of community-based organisations, these groups largely been bypassed in the structures set up by BRL. Their only channel for participation by local groups has been the Focus Groups and the Working Groups, membership of which was decided by invitations issued by BRL (an example of what Chanan describes as engaging with the community groups that are most organised and easiest to find at the start of a programme). Furthermore, the ability of community groups to participate in such Working Groups on an ongoing basis is hampered by their own lack of resources to deal with the complexity of issues involved in the regeneration process.

CAPs purpose in this research has been to investigate the experience of community groups of the opportunities for involvement in the regeneration process. The following Chapters describe how we undertook the research and the results that emerged.

## Introduction

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This report is the result of a year-long research process by CAP with the support of Nexus Research Co-operative. The research process was firmly rooted in the guiding principles of CAP. Overall CAP aims to:

- Respond to the needs of local groups in order to strengthen them in the work they are doing.
- Initiate activity where there are gaps in what is being provided by and for groups locally.
- Draw lessons from the experience of local groups that can inform policy makers and be in a position to make those lessons heard.

We have included this chapter giving a detailed account of the research process because we believe it might be useful to other organisations that want to undertake a research project. The process can be tableed through a number of stages; each stage in the research process has involved local people and local groups as much as possible.

As with any research process the first step is to decide the aims and objectives of the project. The management committee of CAP, which is voluntary and made up of people who live and work in the area, formed a Regeneration Strategy Group made up of representatives from CAP, the Community and Family Training Agency (CAFTA) and an independent research body, NEXUS. This group decided the aims and objectives of the research process as set out in the introduction to this report.

The Regeneration Strategy Group also devised and oversaw each of the succeeding stages of the research process.

The second stage was to agree on the methods for carrying out the research. CAP firmly believes in collective action by local people in identifying their needs and deciding on the best solution to their problems. It was fundamental to the process that it should involve local people as much as possible, this would later include employing local people to carry out the research.

Guided by this principle the Regeneration Strategy Group agreed that their assumptions about the concerns of community groups might not necessarily reflect the actual needs and concerns of community groups in the area. Instead, a good model of practice would be to go out and ask the community groups what are the issues of concern to them.

To achieve this the Regeneration Strategy Group began with a pilot consultation that was carried out during the Autumn of 1998. Eight groups, representing a wide range of interests, were chosen for the pilot process. Each of these groups was contacted and a time for an informal discussion was arranged. Each discussion was semi-structured and lasted about two hours. While the discussion was broad based and open, some of the main questions developed and explored were:

- What did the community group know about the regeneration?
- How would the regeneration affect them and their participants?
- What level of contact did the group have with BRL?
- Were there issues or concerns that the group felt were not being addressed in the regeneration?
- What opportunities do the group see arising out of the regeneration?
- Did the group have any strategies to deal with the changes being brought about by the regeneration?
- What support would the group need to put these strategies into action?

The transcripts from each discussion were written up in preparation for analysis.

When all of the pilot interviews had taken place a comparison of recurring themes was carried out (thematic analysis). The outcomes of this analysis were then summarised. The findings of the pilot consultation were presented to the groups who took part in a meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> of January 1999. In addition to this, a history of the development of Ballymun and a comparison of other urban redevelopment projects in Ireland were presented. These two presentations provided a framework within which to consider the current redevelopment of Ballymun. Three questions were then asked:

- Are you happy with what CAP is doing?
- What can groups do to address the issues raised?
- How can CAP support groups to do this?

There were two outcomes from this meeting. Firstly, the community groups who participated were happy with current research methods and for CAP to continue and expand its research. Secondly, it was recognised that community groups were not adequately informed about, prepared for or involved in the regeneration process and that there was no space where community groups could come together to discuss common issues that affected them.

In response to this, CAP agreed to facilitate the establishment of a network of community groups, which had already been called for at a public meeting about the Ballymun Arts and Community Resource Centre in June 1998.

With the assistance of Nexus Research Co-operative the findings of the pilot consultation were structured into a focus document. One of the unforeseen concerns arising from the pilot consultation stage was the uncertainty of community groups surrounding their accommodation in the future. This theme was included and developed in the focus document.

The Regeneration Strategy Group employed two local residents with considerable experience of voluntary and community activity in the area, Paula Cantwell and Antoinette Doyle, to carry out the research. The process of contacting and talking to groups began at the start of February and finished at the end of May 1999. In this time over 50 community and youth groups participated in the process, approximately one third of the community groups active in the area. The sample of groups that participated represented the wide range of interests, activities and management structures that are evident among groups in Ballymun.

An ongoing assessment of the methodology of the research process was carried out while the interviews were being conducted. One of the assessment tools used was the production of an interim report by the researchers. The report is as follows:

## **Researchers Interim Report April 1999**

**By Paula Cantwell and Antoinette Doyle.**

*From the beginning we had a very positive response from the groups. The initial contact was made with the groups by letter in early February. We then followed up on the letter with phone calls to the groups, explaining some more about the research and also inviting the groups to meet with us. Some groups requested that we send on the questionnaire, and they would return it to us, we explained that we had discussed doing this but had decided against it feeling that the personal interaction with groups would be more beneficial. When we met the groups we explained that we were working for CAP, we stressed the confidentiality of the research and reassured groups that the questions were the same for all groups.*

*The research was carried out through facilitated group sessions, which took place in the groups own premises. We found that most sessions ran over time due to interest in the subject. Very few groups declined on our request to take part in the research.*

*We feel that this research is needed, and that it was an advantage for us being local people, as we knew a lot of the groups and their members. This helped us to promote and develop a relaxed atmosphere for both ourselves and the group to work in. We feel that the research has raised both awareness and many questions among the groups that we interviewed. All of the groups we visited felt that their input into the regeneration process was vital for community groups to survive in the Ballymun of the future.*

The methods used to analyse and correlate the information gathered during the research process have been a mix of quantitative and qualitative techniques. For example, we quantified the number of part-time and full-time staff and the main sources of funding for community group in the area. For the analysis of the level of consultation around the regeneration we used largely quantifiable information rather than anecdotal. By correlating 'the most common forms of consultation', with 'the frequency of contact between community groups and Ballymun Regeneration Limited', we could give an accurate estimate of the quality of the consultation process.

For the sections of the report highlighting the issues and concerns of community groups, we have used thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a process for encoding qualitative information. The encoding requires an "explicit code". This code may be a list of themes where a theme is a pattern found in the information that can help organise possible observations or interpret aspects of the phenomenon.

Using thematic analysis gives the reader a focussed view of the most widespread concerns for community groups. It may omit some of the less frequently raised concerns of community groups and this is a weakness of the method used. This method has worked well in the section dealing with the 'construction and maintenance' of future accommodation for community groups and strongly highlights the views of community groups about who has responsibility for these issues.

A shortfall of the research process was the early decision to use Microsoft Excel for data entry and analysis. The main problem with this tool is the limit on the number of characters allowed per 'cell'. This meant that some of the qualitative answers had to be abbreviated and took away from the richness of the information emerging from discussions with groups. However, a more comprehensive response to the needs of community groups was developed in stage six of the research process.

Once the information was gathered and collated, the next stage in the process was to return to the Regeneration Strategy Group who agreed that a public meeting should be held and the findings of the research should be presented back to the community. It was crucial that the findings should be presented in the most accessible way possible.

The CAP research feedback day was arranged for the 7<sup>th</sup> of July 1999. The structure of the day included inputs on the background to the process by Brian Dillon of NEXUS Research, the experience of doing the research presented by our two researchers and a presentation of the findings by CAPs Development Worker Colm Hackett.

Representatives from over 30 groups active in the area attended this meeting. Attendees were invited to take part in workgroups to discuss the findings of the research. The day produced agreed statements from participants that are included in the next two chapters.

Writing the report developed into a collaborative process that involved drawing the different strands of the research together. These strands were:

- A review of the history of Ballymun from publications at local, national and international levels.
- A review of reports and releases by community groups and community development organisations relating to the refurbishment and redevelopment of Ballymun.
- An ongoing record of media (Newspapers/Magazines) documenting and commenting on the regeneration of Ballymun.
- A review of literature covering redevelopment, regeneration and refurbishment of areas nationally and internationally which have undergone similar processes.
- A review of Government statements of policy, publications and reports.
- Detailing the process and results of the local research with community groups.

A Summary of the results of the research was published in January 2000 and widely circulated among

community groups and statutory agencies in the area over the next couple of months. CAP intended that the Summary would spark interest in the full report in the hope that the full report will be widely debated locally and further abroad.

Drawing everything together to produce the full report was delayed by a changeover in CAP staff when Colm Hackett left and it took some time to recruit a replacement. The full report was completed in November 2000.

## **Introduction**

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These findings were originally presented back to the community groups who took part in the research process on the 7<sup>th</sup> of July 1999. The findings have brought to light a wide range of issues that affect community groups in Ballymun. This chapter reveals the extent of anxiety over community-wide fears of dislocation through the regeneration.

The findings also identify a number of statutory agencies that have a stake in Ballymun and share some of the responsibility in the support and maintenance of Ballymun's existing community infrastructure. One aim of this research process is to provide a focus for community groups on common issues that will affect their work over the coming years.

The findings are grouped into five sections:

- Section One concentrates on the background of groups and the diversity of the 'social economy' in Ballymun.
- Section Two examines the extent and quality of the consultation process linked to the regeneration of the area.
- Section Three brings out the issues most often raised by community groups in relation to the regeneration.
- Section Four deals directly with the issue of future accommodation for community groups and examines the different aspects involved.
- Section Five looks at the strategies that community groups may have for dealing with issues raised, identifies what their main needs are in terms of support and briefly outlines some pro-active responses suggested by the groups.

This first section examines the work of the groups who participated in the research process, the participants or target groups of each community group and the main activities each group is engaged in. The section continues with an outline of the number of part-time and full-time workers in the community sector in Ballymun and who the main funding agencies for workers in the community sector are.

Community groups were asked "What is the focus of interest for your groups work?" The answers shown in Table 1 demonstrate the variety of areas which community groups are involved in. Choosing from a list of 12 different activities all of the groups said they had more than one focus of interest. The most popular focus for groups was recreation and providing recreational facilities; out of 52 groups, 45 said that this was a focus of interest for them. Education and health are important interests for community groups in the area; these categories are broad and may take in a range of activities and initiatives.

<b>TABLE 1</b>	
<b>What Focus For Your Group?</b>	<b>Number of Groups</b>
Recreation	45
Education	37
Health	31
Employment	28
Arts	28
Community Development	27
Environment	19
Civil/Legal Rights	16
Communications	15
Housing	11
Transport	9
Other	29

Other categories such as community development, environment and communication are often indirect actions which community groups support and promote, but may not be thought of as a main focus of interest. Finally, the least mentioned categories, i.e. housing and transport, are specialised but are integrated and overlap with other interests.

Due to an oversight in the planning stage of the research one omission from this and subsequent tables is the work being done by groups with individuals, families and communities affected by the drug issue. There is a considerable amount of work being done around this issue in Ballymun at present and much of the work covered by the 'other' category in each table falls into this area.

Groups were asked "Who is your main target group?" Most groups said they cater for more than one target group and the majority of groups somewhat catered for each one of the listed target groups. 'Youth' was the most prevalent target group.

<b>TABLE 2</b>	
<b>What Do You Work With?</b>	<b>Number of Groups</b>
Youth	46
Unemployed	37
People with Disabilities	37
Men	35
Travellers	34
Women	31
Residents	31
Lone Parents	30
Elderly	30
Other	33

As can be seen from Table 2, most target groups were supported by at least thirty groups catering for their needs. Where the number of groups working with a particular target group exceeds thirty, it is likely that

there is extra support and a more definite focus from groups on this target group.

Table 3 outlines the groups main activity and how groups work with their target group, focussing on 10 categories. The Table shows that the work of most groups involves providing a service. For 45 of the groups, these services include information and advice for people. The Table also shows training is a primary means by which groups provide support for people. Local networking is strongly represented on the Table and is an integral part of providing advice and information for people. The Table also shows that local networking is further supported by a number of organisations that provide resources or amenities to community and voluntary groups. A smaller number of groups are engaged in specialised activities like lobbying or campaigning, producing media and supporting enterprise.

<b>TABLE 3</b>	
<b>Main Activity of Group?</b>	<b>Number of Groups</b>
Provision of Services	48
Information & Advice	42
Training	38
Local Networking	33
Resource for Groups	33
Providing Amenities	29
Lobbying/Campaigning	17
Enterprise	17
Producing Media	15
Other	17

Tables 4 and 5 give an estimate of the numbers of people working in the community in Ballymun. Over 80% of the groups in this study employ full-time workers. In total, there are 115 people working full-time with the community groups who participated in the research. These are people employed directly by the groups and does not include staff employed by statutory agencies who may be seconded full-time to community groups.

<b>TABLE 4</b>	
<b>Full or Part Time Staff?</b>	<b>Number of Groups</b>
Full Time Staff	43
Part Time Staff	32

<b>TABLE 5</b>	
<b>How Many Staff?</b>	<b>Number of Staff</b>
Full Time Staff	115
Part Time Staff	231

In addition to full-time workers, almost two thirds of the groups we spoke with employ people on a part-time basis. There are also a greater number of people working part-time; in total there are 231 part-time workers. In terms of part-time workers, the smaller number of groups is employing the greater number of people. This may be attributed to the importance of Community Employment Schemes in supporting community activities in Ballymun.

The research also posed questions about the number of voluntary workers with groups. However, this proved impossible to quantify, as voluntary workers are more flexible and often contribute their work only when they are most needed.

This research has established that there are at least 115 people employed full-time with community groups in Ballymun. To delve further into the makeup of the social economy in the area; groups were asked "Who funds your full-time workers?" Table 6 shows that FÁS is the largest funder of full-time workers in the area, funding full-time employees for 20 community groups.

<b>TABLE 6</b>	
<b>Who Funds Full Time Staff?</b>	<b>Number of Groups</b>
FÁS	20
DSCFA	7
Department of Education	6
Self/Private Funding	5
ERHA	4
Ballymun LDTF	3
European Union	2
Ballymun Partnership	2
Parish	1
Ballymun Job Centre	1
Combat Poverty Agency	1
Dublin Corporation	1

After FÁS, the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs (DSCFA) provides 6 groups with funding for full-time employees. Other significant funders of full-time workers include the Department of Education and Science and the ERHA who provide core funding for 6 and 4 groups respectively. The Ballymun Local Drug Task Force and the European Union fund 4 groups each. The Ballymun Partnership funds 2 groups and the Ballymun Job Centre, Combat Poverty Agency, the Parish and Dublin Corporation provide full-time workers for 1 group each.

Table 7 outlines the range of agencies that fund the 231 part-time employees employed by the groups in this study. Again FÁS tops the poll funding part-time employees for over 60% of the groups. The Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs funds the next largest number of groups i.e. 3 groups. Most of the other funding bodies fund part-time workers for 1 group with the exception of the Ballymun Partnership which funds part-time staff for 2 community groups.

<b>TABLE 7</b>	
<b>Who Funds Part Time Staff?</b>	<b>Number of Groups</b>
FÁS	23
DSCFA	3
Ballymun Partnership	2
Department of Education	1
ERHA	1
Ballymun LDTF	1
European Union	1
Ballymun Job Centre	1
Dublin Corporation	1

## **Summary of Section One: Background To Groups**

- There were 52 groups taking part in the research. These groups come from a wide range of backgrounds and focus on many aspects of community development work. Tables 1, 2 and 3 demonstrate that the activities, target groups and focus of the groups are wide-ranging and flexible, incorporating many of the issues that affect the community in Ballymun.
- The groups who took part in the study employ 346 staff. There are approximately twice as many part-time workers as full-time workers in the community sector in Ballymun.
- There is a significant social economy in Ballymun. These tables do not represent the totality of the social economy, as they have not included all groups in Ballymun. In addition, the tables do not include an assessment of the level of voluntary work.
- This study highlights that there is a range of funding agencies that have a stake in Ballymun. Tables 6 and 7 show the main agencies supporting the community in Ballymun. What is most striking is the significance of FÁS, who topped the poll in both instances, as the most important funder of part-time and full-time workers in Ballymun's social economy.

A primary aim of this research was to assess the level of awareness among community groups of the potential consequences of the regeneration process. Ballymun Regeneration Limited (BRL) is the company established to oversee the redevelopment. For this study we focussed on the level of consultation between BRL and community groups. By using quantitative information, we have tried to present an analysis of the quality of this consultation.

Firstly, groups were asked "Do you know who BRL are?" The response was very positive. Table 8 tells us that 90% of the groups who took part are aware of the company and only 10% of groups said they did not know of BRL.

**TABLE 8**

<b>Do You Know Who BRL Are?</b>	<b>Number of Groups</b>
Yes We Do	46 (90%)
No We Don't	5 (10%)

Groups were then asked how aware they are of BRLs role and responsibilities. Respondents were encouraged to answer as they wished but the answers were categorised into the three pre-selected answers shown. Table 9 shows that just over a third (35%) of groups said they were very well informed of the role and responsibilities of BRL. The largest percentage of groups (41%) said they were unsure what BRLs role and responsibilities are. Nearly a quarter of groups (24%) said they were totally unaware of the role and responsibilities of BRL. The table shows that the bulk of responses (65%) came under the 'unsure' or 'totally unaware' categories.

<b>TABLE 9</b>	
<b>Aware of BRLs Role?</b>	<b>Number of Groups</b>
We Are Very Well Informed	18 (35%)
We Are Not Sure	21 (41%)
We Are Totally Unaware	12 (24%)

Groups were asked to describe the kind of contact that they had had with BRL to date. Table 10 shows public meetings as the most common type of contact for groups. In addition, a large number of groups have visited the BRL exhibition in Stormanstown House (BRLs offices). This indicates that community groups are aware that the regeneration will affect their work and have actively sought information on the progress of the regeneration.

<b>TABLE 10</b>	
<b>Kinds Of Contact With BRL?</b>	<b>Number of Groups</b>
Attended Public Meeting	33
Visited Exhibition	28
Received Newsletters	26
Visited Stormanstown House	22
Participated In Survey	19
Individual Contact	19
Took Part In Workgroups	12
Other	9

Groups were asked how many times they had each type of contact outlined in the previous Table (includes "other") and the number of contacts between groups and BRL were grouped into intervals of five. Table 11 shows that the largest number of groups (18 groups) has had contact with BRL five times or less. Moving further along the scale shows that a smaller number of groups have had more frequent contact with BRL. A very small number of groups (2 groups) have been in contact with BRL significantly more often than the majority of groups in the study.

<b>TABLE 11</b>	
<b>Times In Contact With BRL?</b>	<b>Number of Groups</b>
0 – 5 Times	19
6 – 10 Times	13
11 – 15 Times	4
16 – 20 Times	5
20+ Times	3

Groups were asked to choose from one of three pre-selected options to express the level of satisfaction they felt with the *type* of contact they have had with BRL. A significant majority of groups that took part in the research (82%) said they are 'unsatisfied' with the type of contact they were having with BRL. 12% of groups said they are 'fairly satisfied' with the type of contact they have had with BRL. A small percentage (6%) was 'very satisfied' with the type of contact they have had with BRL. The latter percentage corresponds with Table 11 where a small number of groups have been in contact with BRL more than 20 times.

<b>TABLE 12</b>	
<b>Satisfied With Contact Type?</b>	<b>Number of Groups</b>
We Are Unsatisfied	40 (82%)
We Are Fairly Satisfied	6 (12%)
We Are Very Satisfied	3 (6%)

Groups were asked whether they were satisfied with the *frequency* of contact they have had with BRL. As in Table 12, Table 13 shows that overall a small percentage of groups were either 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' (6% and 12%), while the majority of groups (82%) were 'unsatisfied' with the frequency of contact they have had with BRL.

<b>TABLE 13</b>	
<b>Satisfied Contact Frequency?</b>	<b>Number of Groups</b>
We Are Unsatisfied	40 (82%)
We Are Fairly Satisfied	6 (12%)
We Are Very Satisfied	3 (6%)

## **Summary of Section Two: Consultation And The Regeneration Of Ballymun**

- 90% of groups in this study are aware of who BRL are.
- The level of awareness among community groups of the role and responsibilities of BRL is varied. Just over a third of the groups say they are very well informed of BRL's role and responsibilities while almost two thirds of groups are either unsure or totally unaware.
- The largest number of groups has had contact with BRL five times or less. A small number of groups have been in contact with BRL more than 20 times.
- For community groups, the most common forms of contact with BRL are public meetings, newsletters and visiting the exhibition (in that order). The extent of personal contact,

surveys or participation in workgroups is much more limited.

- When groups themselves were asked to assess the quality of the consultation they have had with BRL, there were similar results for the level of satisfaction with the kind and frequency of consultation. In both cases the majority (82%) were unsatisfied with their experience of the consultation process, while 12% were satisfied and only 6% were very satisfied with the kind and frequency of their contact with BRL.

This section examines the responses of groups when they were questioned about the effects of the regeneration. The section starts with groups being asked what changes do they feel the regeneration will bring to Ballymun as a whole. Continuing with this line of questioning, groups were asked how they thought their own group would be affected. The responses are shown in Tables 14 and 15. Table 16 examines how participants feel other community groups in Ballymun will be affected by the regeneration. Table 17 is the last table in this section and explores how groups feel the people who use their services will be affected by the regeneration.

These four tables were compiled using thematic analysis. The tables do not represent the full range of issues and concerns expressed by the community groups who took part in the research. This is partly because thematic analysis focuses the findings on the most common answers from groups, necessarily omitting some data.

Groups were asked “What changes does your group feel the regeneration will bring to Ballymun?” Table 14 shows that about 40% of groups are concerned that the regeneration will have a ‘negative effect’ on community spirit in Ballymun. It is significant that almost 40% of the groups have independently mentioned this issue. The cause or nature of this ‘negative effect’ is not evident from this Table; however later tables will indicate the major issues of concern and possible supports needed for community organisations to address them.

<b>TABLE 14</b>	
<b>Changes To Ballymun?</b>	<b>Number of Groups</b>
Negative Effect On Community Spirit	20
Uncertain But Fearful	19
Challenges For Community Groups	11
Will Increase Debt & Poverty	8
Regeneration Will Bring Good Changes	8
Will Lose Green Areas & Play Areas	7
Concerned About Drugs Issue	4
Concerned About Safety	3

Not all groups expressed fears around the changes that the regeneration will bring, 15% of groups felt that the regeneration will bring good changes to Ballymun. Table 14 also shows that 37% of groups are concerned about the effects of the regeneration as a whole, illustrating the uncertainty community groups are feeling around the whole project. Many groups also felt that the regeneration will bring challenges for the survival of community groups active in the area. For this question, and a number of others, four specific

issues were raised again and again by almost all of the groups:

**An increase in debt and poverty in the area:** Recognising that Ballymun is one of the most disadvantaged and socially excluded communities in the state, groups expressed concerns on this issue. Groups believe that the transition from flats to houses will incur costs for tenants, for example, furnishings and fittings that cannot be transferred from flats to houses will need to be replaced. This is a cost that will affect everyone in transition and therefore a basic need. Groups are concerned that this need will not be recognised and addressed by decision-makers and its neglect will further open Ballymun to moneylenders and loan sharks pushing people into traps of debt and poverty.

**The loss of green space and play areas:** There are a number of open areas and green spaces in Ballymun, many of these are of a poor quality or in a state of disrepair. Despite this they are the only option for the hundreds of children living in the area and groups are concerned about how much of this space will be used for the regeneration and how much quality open space will remain. Groups feel that it is crucial that any development in the area should prioritise the needs of young people growing up in Ballymun now.

**Concern around the issue of drugs:** A serious concern among groups and local people in the area is what steps are being taken as part of the regeneration to tackle the drug issue in Ballymun. Many people are sceptical that the provision of new housing for people will actually change the current situation around drugs. Groups believe that there is a need for the regeneration to recognise this issue and to ensure that it is tackled in an honest and equitable way.

**Concern about safety, especially of young people and children, during construction:** Reflecting the concerns of many people in the area, community groups expressed their concern around safety of children. Construction work means normal pathways being uprooted and disruption to traffic, normal patterns are changed and this can place children in the path of danger including the possibility of fatal situations. Construction also involves heavy machinery, a novelty for children who often do not see potential dangers. In addition, the poor drainage in Ballymun means that some open areas are swamps rather than parks. Digging up the open areas will result in an increase in the amount of mud and dirt increasing wear and tear on clothes. Despite assurances, groups feel it is still unclear how much preventive action will be taken by the contractors to keep children out of harms way.

When we asked the participants how they felt their group would be affected by the regeneration, the largest proportion of groups (35%) were concerned about their own accommodation needs in the future. This is a major concern as many community groups work out of flats and basements in the area. The rights of community groups as tenants of Dublin Corporation are very unclear and groups have not been included in the formal consultation structures through the Area Forums. In light of this, many groups felt it would be a challenge to survive. This Table shows 20% of groups were strongly concerned about survival. Another 20% of groups either didn't know what the future would be for their group or felt that they would not survive the changes that the regeneration would bring.

**TABLE 15**

<b>Effect On Your Group?</b>	<b>Number of Groups</b>
Uncertain About Premises & Future	18
Challenge To Survive	9
Don't Know/Uncertain Future	6
Concerned About Funding	6
We Won't Survive	6
We'll Have More Work To Do	6
Worried About Our Children & Safety	5

One in ten of the groups were also concerned about the increase in workload for their group that has been brought about by the regeneration of the area. Many groups feel there will be an increase in the number of people needing their services and an increase in the range of supports they will need to provide for people. This concern is heightened by the awareness that other groups may have difficulty surviving the challenges brought about by the redevelopment, thus weakening existing support networks among community groups.

The research has also identified widespread concerns among community groups about funding issues. Groups who do survive are faced with the loss of current subsidies in the form of low-cost heating and rent. This will mean an increase in operating costs and diminishing resources for their activities. Relocation, whether to other premises or temporary accommodation, will also be costly for community groups. On a wider scale there are concerns among groups about the amount of money coming into the area through the regeneration process and whether this will affect the perception of Ballymun by other funding agencies. Groups expressed fears that funding aimed at "bricks and mortar" responses to social exclusion would result in funding agencies overlooking the need for social and "soft" supports (many of which are delivered by community groups) for the social and economic development of the community as a whole.

Table 16 highlights the concerns community groups feel about how other community groups would be affected by the regeneration. On the positive side, some groups feel that the regeneration will bring greater opportunities for networking and interaction in Ballymun's community sector. The most common concern was the effect of community groups losing or having to share premises. A number of groups felt that other community groups will go (i.e. groups in the area would not survive the regeneration) and that the collapse of any groups threatens the existing social and community infrastructure.

<b>TABLE 16</b>		
<b>Effect On Other Groups?</b>		<b>Number of Groups</b>
Losing/Having To Share Premises		19
Groups Will Go		9
Other Groups Will Need Support		3
Will Cause Financial Difficulties		3
Will Affect Their Participants		3
Opportunities For Networking		3
Increased Workload		1

Overall, groups found it difficult to say what the challenges for other community groups will be; but, as Table 16 shows, there is consensus that the regeneration will cause financial difficulties for some groups and that the participants of other groups could be affected by financial and other changes. In addition, the current workload of groups could increase and it was felt that other groups could need extra support to face the challenges ahead.

Groups were asked how they felt their participants and service users would be affected by the regeneration. While we got a wide range of answers to this question, Table 17 has focussed the answers to eight main categories of response. The largest proportion of groups felt that their participants will need more support to deal with the changes brought by the regeneration; 30% of groups gave this as their main answer. This answer was closely followed by increased financial difficulties for participants.

<b>TABLE 17</b>	
<b>Effect On Your Participants?</b>	<b>Number of Groups</b>
They Will Need More Support	15
Will Cause Them Financial Problems	14
We Need More Facilities	11
They Will Need Training	6
Safety/Access Problems	6
Security & Drugs Problems	4
They Will Have More Jobs	2

A number of groups, especially those focussed on youth, felt that there were not enough facilities for their participants in the area at present and with the looming loss of green space actions should be taken, as part of the regeneration, to cater for this need. 12% of groups feel that people using their service will need training to deal with the changes. Other groups raised questions about who will be responsible for safety and access during reconstruction and about how the drugs issue will be affected by the regeneration. A number of groups feel that the regeneration will bring more jobs into the area.

### **Summary of Section Three: What Changes Will The Regeneration Bring To Ballymun?**

- One of the greatest changes that community groups feel will be brought about by the regeneration is a "negative effect on community spirit" in the area. This negative effect takes in a spread of issues including loss of play areas, challenges for community groups to survive, the drug issue and increased debt and poverty in the area.
- The largest proportion of groups feel that it will be a challenge to survive the regeneration and on the whole groups were uncertain about their future in Ballymun during and after the regeneration.
- Accommodation for community groups is an urgent and community-wide issue. Many groups feel that the biggest challenge for community groups in the future Ballymun is the prospect of losing or having to share premises. There is a significant fear among groups that some groups will be lost to the community in the process.
- Groups are very concerned about the effects the regeneration will have on their participants. A large number of groups feel that the regeneration will cause financial difficulties for their target groups and that people using their services will need significant supports to deal with the changes.
- A persistent concern among community groups is the issue of safety for children and the issue of access during the building stages of the regeneration. There is recognition among several community groups that the demolition of the flats will not tackle the existing drug problem in the area. These concerns arose when questions were focussed away from community groups and towards people supported by community groups and the community as a whole.

The research questionnaire included a section on premises for community groups. This is an issue that arose strongly in the pilot stage of the research process. In addition, other agencies that we consulted while drafting the questionnaire, e.g. BRL and Ballymun Partnership, asked us to include some specific questions on the issue of premises.

Groups were asked to state how much they are using the premises that they currently occupy. The responses are summarised in Table 18. While there is some variety in opening hours (for example some organisations open earlier or close earlier) the majority of groups surveyed are open to the public during regular offices hours, i.e. 35 groups open to the community for up to eight hours a day.

<b>TABLE 18</b>	
<b>Hours Open To Public?</b>	<b>Number of Groups</b>
Daytime (up to 8 hours)	35
Evenings	13
Weekends	2

There are 13 groups that are open in the evening; many of these are groups that open in the evening in addition to the full working day. Finally, there are a small number of groups that also open at weekends. From the information gathered, there is no group open solely on the weekend, instead weekends mean additional hours added to the working week.

Table 19 shows that the premises of 89% of groups involved in the study will be directly effected by the regeneration. Other questions included in the focus document but not shown in this report indicate that demolition is the most common “effect” that the regeneration will have on the premises of the community groups that we spoke with.

<b>TABLE 19</b>	
<b>Will Your Premises Be Effected?</b>	<b>Number of Groups</b>
Yes	31 (89%)
No	4 (11%)

Groups were asked if they knew where they would be located after the regeneration. Table 20 shows that 28% of groups had an idea of their future location. The regeneration process will not affect 11% of groups, as they will remain in their present location. (This is the same percentage as the 11% not directly affected by the regeneration in Table 19).

<b>TABLE 20</b>	
<b>Where Will You Be Housed?</b>	<b>Number of Groups</b>
We Don't Know	32 (72%)
Present Location	5 (11%)
Community Arts & Resource Centre	4 (9%)
Womens Resource Centre	2 (4%)
Shopping Centre	1 (2%)
Central Youth Facility	1 (2%)

Almost three-quarters (72%) of the groups surveyed do not know where they will be located in the new Ballymun. Other groups were able to identify possible locations, such as the new Central Youth Facility (to become available for occupancy in 2001), the new Ballymun Arts and Community Resource Centre (to become available for occupancy in 2001) and the planned Womens Resource Centre.

In asking groups about who they think might pay for the construction of new premises, the researchers were very conscious of the danger of raising false hopes among groups. Before this question was asked, the researchers cautiously explored whether groups would like to have their own premises. All of the groups said they would like their own premises and all 52 groups chose to answer the question "Who would fund the construction of premises for your group?"

<b>TABLE 21</b>	
<b>Who Will Fund Building New Premises?</b>	<b>Number of Groups</b>
Dublin Corporation	16 (32%)
We Don't Know	9 (17%)
DSCFA	6 (12%)
BRL	5 (10%)
Self Funded	4 (8%)
ERHA	3 (7%)
European Union	2 (4%)
Department of Education	2 (4%)
FÁS	2 (4%)
Young Peoples Facilities & Services Fund	1 (2%)
Department of Justice	1 (2%)

The most significant finding is that over 30% of groups named Dublin Corporation as most likely to fund the construction of premises for their group. Other agencies that groups thought would fund the construction of premises were the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs (12%) and BRL (10%). Some groups were confident about who will fund the construction of premises. These were groups who expect to find accommodation in planned premises that will be funded by the European Union (4%), the Department of Education and Science (4%), the Young Peoples Facilities and Services Fund (2%) and the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (2%).

Table 22 follows on from Table 21 with a look at the longer-term issue of the upkeep and maintenance of premises for community groups. Groups were asked “Who do you think will pay for the upkeep of new premises for your group?” Again, Dublin Corporation is the agency most commonly expected to support groups with 28% of groups indicating Dublin Corporation as their expected source of support. However, almost the same number of groups (representing 26%) could not give us an answer to this question, highlighting the lack of funding options available to community groups for ongoing running costs.

<b>TABLE 22</b>	
<b>Who Will Fund Upkeep Of Premises?</b>	<b>Number of Groups</b>
Dublin Corporation	14 (28%)
We Don't Know	13 (26%)
DSCFA	8 (11%)
BRL	3 (7%)
Self Funded	3 (7%)
ERHA	3 (7%)
FÁS	2 (4%)
Department Of Education	2 (4%)
European Union	1 (2%)
Department of Justice	1 (2%)
Young Peoples Facilities & Services Fund	1 (2%)

The Table indicates that many groups could be looking towards their main funding body, e.g. the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs, for support. Other groups indicated they will be looking for new opportunities to support their activities and accommodation needs, but are unclear as to what form these opportunities will take.

Table 23 shows the response that groups gave to the question: “Would your groups be willing to work with other groups to identify new premises?”

<b>TABLE 23</b>	
<b>Work With Other Groups To Get Premises?</b>	<b>Number of Groups</b>
Yes	38 (78%)
We would like to but we can't	7 (14%)
No	4 (8%)

When groups were asked if they would be willing to talk to other groups about sharing premises, the vast majority said they would be willing to talk to other groups:

<b>TABLE 24</b>	
<b>Talk To Other Groups About Sharing Premises?</b>	<b>Number of Groups</b>
Yes	31 (82%)

No	7 (18%)
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Tables 23 and 24 are the result of questions that CAP was asked to include in their research by BRL. Both Tables reflect the need for a collective response to the issue of premises by community groups. In the first instance, 78% of groups said they are willing to work with other groups to identify premises. Only 8% of group said they would not be willing while 14% of groups said they would like to work with other groups to identify premises but they can't. Many of the groups that said they could not share accommodation use their premises on a full-time basis or have equipment that they have accumulated over years and are concerned about the prospect of unrestricted access to this equipment (raising a further question about storage of equipment). Other groups deal with target groups that need total confidentiality and it is important for these groups to have stand-alone premises.

An overwhelming 82% of groups said they are willing to explore the option of sharing premises with other community groups. Most of these said they would prefer to share with other 'like minded groups'. For the 18% of groups that said they would not be willing to explore the option of sharing premises, their main concern is to protect the confidentiality of their target group.

## **Summary of Section Four: Community Groups And Accommodation Issues**

- Nine out of ten community groups that took part said that their premises will be directly affected by the regeneration. The demolition of the flats and basements is the most pressing concern for community groups.
- A small number of groups could suggest a facility where they could be located in the future; most of these options were in the early planning stage at the time of the research. The majority of groups do not know where they will be accommodated in the new Ballymun.
- A significant number of groups in the area believe that responsibility for re-housing of community groups, and maintenance of accommodation for community groups, lies with Dublin Corporation.
- Most groups expressed a willingness to work with other groups to identify premises.
- Groups are only unwilling to share premises because the nature of their work requires strict confidentiality for their service users.
- Most groups gave a positive response to the possibility of sharing premises with other 'like minded groups'.

Section Five of the research involved discussing with groups whether they had any strategy to deal with the regeneration. One outcome of the research process was to raise awareness among groups of the possible challenges they may face in the course of the regeneration of Ballymun. For most groups the research process gave them an opportunity to discuss the future of their group in the regeneration. Groups who did not have a strategy were encouraged to consider the issues that they themselves had raised in the discussion and to consider what supports they may need in the future.

Tables 25, 26 and 27 show the responses when groups were asked how often they discuss the regeneration and with whom they have these discussions.

Table 25 outlines how often the group discussed the issue of regeneration among themselves. The results show that the largest number of groups never discusses the regeneration and the smallest number of groups discusses the regeneration very often within their own group.

<b>TABLE 25</b>	
<b>We Discuss It Among Ourselves...</b>	<b>Number of Groups</b>
Never	14
Very Seldom	11
Often	13
Very Often	6

The second Table in this series, Table 26, outlines how often (or not) groups discuss the regeneration with their target group. Similar results emerge from this question. The majority of groups never or very seldom discuss the regeneration with their target group while a small number do so very often.

<b>TABLE 26</b>	
<b>Discuss It With Our Participants...</b>	<b>Number of Groups</b>
Never	21
Very Seldom	10
Often	8
Very Often	5

Table 27 presents a summary of how often groups in Ballymun discuss the regeneration with other groups. Its results are strikingly similar, with most groups falling into the first two categories (either never speaking about it or speaking of it very seldom). Groups who frequently discuss the regeneration with other groups are once again in the minority.

<b>TABLE 27</b>	
<b>Discuss It With Other Groups...</b>	<b>Number of Groups</b>
Never	17
Very Seldom	10
Often	12
Very Often	5

The evidence of this series of Tables suggest that there is a small number of groups who are either directly engaged in the process (as already seen in Table 11) or are very concerned about the consequences of the regeneration process and are raising questions and responding to events. These groups do discuss the regeneration frequently. The majority of groups, for a variety of reasons, are not discussing the regeneration and its consequences. These groups are not developing strategies to deal with the challenges and opportunities presented by the regeneration.

Groups were asked whether they had a strategy to deal with the regeneration. Groups have a wide variety

of ideas about the future, most of which are about how to accommodate groups. Some examples of what groups responded with include:

- “We are hoping to get a house”
- “We would like to erect new premises”
- “We are talking to the Women’s Resource Centre about it”
- “The Health Board are working on a strategy”
- “We are talking to another group”
- “We want to build an extension to our premises”
- “We are talking with the Community & Family Training Agency”

Numerous issues for community groups emerged through the research process. Many of these issues had not been discussed in any detail by the groups before taking part in the research. Having raised these issues, the research then attempted to provide groups with an opportunity to identify some of the supports that their group will need to address the issues raised. Table 28 shows the results from asking groups to look at the supports that they will need.

<b>TABLE 28</b>	
<b>What Support Will Your Group Need?</b>	<b>Number of Groups</b>
Premises for the future	25
Information & to be listened to	11
Support around funding	9
Support from other groups	7
Suitable facilities	3
A central location	3
Support to include young people	3
We will need training	2
Need help to extend premises	2
Need to know about safety & access	2
Storage during transition	1

Firstly, and not surprisingly, the most pressing issue for the majority of groups is accommodation. This issue is raised four times in this Table alone:

- 25 groups said they need support around premises for the future.
- 3 groups said they need support to get suitable facilities.
- 3 additional groups feel that a central location in the new Ballymun is a priority and that they need support to achieve this.
- 2 other groups said that they need support to extend their existing premises.

Secondly, information and consultation are central issues for groups. 11 groups said they need support in the form of information and being listened to while 2 groups said their main support need is to know about safety and access. Thirdly, 3 groups said they need support to include young people. The issue of including young people has arisen constantly throughout the findings of this research. Many groups feel

that if the area is to be regenerated it should be done for the children and young people in a way that they are the focus of all actions taken as part of the regeneration. Lastly, 'support from other groups', 'support around funding' and 'the need for training', emerged as areas where 18 groups feel they need support.

The previous Table outlined the main issues with which groups felt they would need support. Table 29 lists the results of asking groups what actions are needed to support their group in addressing the challenges arising from the regeneration:

<b>TABLE 29</b>	
<b>How Can You Be Supported?</b>	<b>Number of Groups</b>
Networking & support from other groups	15
Commitment to community needs from BRL	8
More consultation with BRL	6
Suitable premises	6
Support around funding	5
Clear information	5
Crèche facilities	2
Lobbying	1
Low cost rent	1

Firstly, the largest number of groups saw networking, i.e. working with other groups with common interests on the issues that affect them, as the most constructive action in addressing their needs. (A question in the focus document asking groups if they would be interested in becoming involved in a network of community groups received an almost 100% “yes” response.) Secondly, a significant number of groups feel that more consultation with, and a commitment, from BRL will meet their needs in relation to the regeneration. Thirdly, groups felt that access to suitable premises as part of the regeneration process would meet their needs. Other groups felt that this would not be enough and the changes brought by the regeneration could only be adequately addressed through additional measures such as support for groups on funding and financial supports like low cost rent. Groups also felt that crèche facilities are not adequately catered for and extra resources should be channelled towards overcoming this shortfall. Finally, one group saw lobbying as the way their needs could be met.

Groups were asked to identify what they need in order to have a constructive input during the regeneration process. Responses can be grouped into three main areas as follows:

## **1. Information:**

Almost half of the groups raised issues around the type of information they need and how often they need to get it. Examples of responses in this category include:

- “We need ongoing contact on developments in the area”
- “We need frequent updates on progress”
- “We need updates on the effects of the regeneration”

- “We need information on the commitment to community needs”

## 2. Consultation:

Just over a quarter of groups independently mentioned more or better consultation as the way they could have an input into the construction phase of the regeneration:

- “We need more consultation with the agencies involved”
- “We need to be consulted on decisions before they happen”
- “We need individual contact and an open door policy from agencies involved”
- “We need transparency and to be included in the whole picture”
- “We need to be consulted about the needs of our group and its clients”

## 3. Safety:

Almost a quarter of the groups were concerned about the construction phases of the regeneration process and the issues and challenges this phase would create.

- “We need to be assured and confident about the safety of children in the area”
- “We need to be sure about safety for the elderly and that they have full access during the building stages”
- “We need to be informed and assured about the security of building sites”
- “We are concerned about noise levels during the building”

## Summary of Section Five: Supports That Groups Need To Deal With The Regeneration

- Most groups do not regularly discuss the regeneration within their own groups, with their participants or service users or with other groups. Only a few groups have a well-developed strategy to deal with the regeneration.
- Accommodation is the priority issue for community groups in the area. Different groups have raised different issues around accommodation such as suitable premises and loss of rent subsidies.
- Many groups are concerned that their needs are not being listened to and that they need clearer information about how they will be affected especially by issues of safety and access.

- Many groups identified networking and support between community groups as a means of addressing the challenges arising through the regeneration.
- Many groups believe that there is a need for a commitment to the needs of community groups as well as clearer information and more effective consultation on the part of BRL.

## Summary of Findings

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- Community based groups in Ballymun employ at least 346 people. Two-thirds of these are part-time and one-third are full-time staff. FÁS, the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs and the Eastern Regional Health Authority fund the majority of these workers.
- The most frequent forms of consultation with BRL are public meetings, newsletters and visits to the exhibition. The vast majority of groups are not satisfied with this type of consultation. A small number of groups are satisfied with the consultation process and these are the groups that have regular contact with BRL.
- There is a lot of uncertainty and many fears among community groups, but there is also hope that the regeneration will bring positive change such as greater job opportunities for people in Ballymun.
- Accommodation for community groups is an urgent and community-wide issue. 90% of groups will be directly affected by the regeneration and the vast majority of these do not know where they will be located in the future.
- Most groups do not have a strategy to address the challenges and opportunities presented to them by the regeneration.
- A significant number of groups in the area believe that rehousing and the responsibility for maintenance of premises for community groups lies with Dublin Corporation.
- Most groups expressed a willingness to work with other groups to identify premises and a strong majority of groups said they would consider sharing premises with other like-minded groups.
- A large proportion of groups feel that the regeneration will cause financial difficulties for their service users who they believe will need more support to deal with the changes.
- Other issues for community groups such as future funding, safety and access, the drugs issue, youth and their increased workload came up again and again during the research. It is also felt by many groups that some community groups will be lost to the community in the process of the regeneration.
- Most groups are unsure about the future and 95% of groups feel they need support, both from other groups, and in the form of clear information and a definite commitment from statutory agencies to the needs of the community.

- Many groups identified networking and mutual support as mechanisms for addressing the issues identified.

Chapter

**8**

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **Introduction**

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The process of producing this report took place over an 18-month period between 1998 and 2000. It included a review of relevant literature; administration of a pilot questionnaire to a small sample of community groups; completion of questionnaires during facilitated workshops with over 50 groups; feedback of initial findings to these groups and relevant agencies; incorporation of further comments from these feedback sessions; and analysis of the material thus gathered. The results of this analysis are presented in this final chapter of conclusions and recommendations.

While the aim of this research has been to investigate the experience of community groups of the Ballymun regeneration process, the conclusions that have emerged and the recommendations that are being made relate to all of the parties to the regeneration programme. Recommendations are therefore being made to community groups in Ballymun; to the state agencies with responsibility for the development of Ballymun; to BRL who have the task of implementing the regeneration programme; and to the Department of the Environment and Local Government which has the final say on what happens in terms of the regeneration of Ballymun.

In order to put these conclusions and recommendations in context, it is important to emphasise some lessons learned from previous regeneration projects in Ireland and abroad:

- Regeneration projects that have focussed exclusively on housing and physical infrastructure aspects of a community have not impacted positively on existing social disadvantage or deprivation.
- Projects that have included community participation in the regeneration process as an objective of the project have had more success in tackling social deprivation problems and in developing a more sustainable community in the long-term.
- It is never too late to begin including the community in a regeneration process.
- While every community is unique, experience has demonstrated that each community possesses local leadership that has the trust of residents and can be tapped into as a resource in developing local participation.
- While 'community involvement' has been a requirement of regeneration projects in Ireland over the past decade, there is no centrally agreed set of criteria for what constitutes community involvement, or even consultation, at local level, leaving individual projects to make it up as they go along.
- At the same time, there is a body of expertise in relation to community involvement that has been developed locally in disadvantaged communities in Ireland and across Europe that can and should be drawn upon.

It is clear from the research that in Ballymun there is an enormous amount of energy and expertise in the community that can and should contribute to the positive regeneration of the area. There is a long history of

the community being proactive in working for improvements in the physical and social environment of Ballymun.

It is also noteworthy that the Ballymun community has been involved in innovative work in partnership with state agencies over a long period of time and has been to the forefront of Dublin communities in devising partnership approaches to local development. There is a corresponding level of experience of partnership among the state agencies operating in Ballymun and a huge reservoir of commitment to the people of the area among all parties that provides a sound basis for positive developments for the future.

The research has established that the priority concerns in relation to the regeneration for community groups are future premises, staffing, funding and the needs of their participants. There is huge uncertainty among groups about what their future will be in the new Ballymun and there is little or no strategic planning for this future being undertaken by groups.

It is clear that most groups feel powerless in relation to the future. There is considerable frustration and negativity about the role and activities of BRL with most groups expressing uncertainty about BRLs exact role and dissatisfaction with their level of contact with, or information from, BRL. A small number of groups are satisfied with their contact with BRL and it is these groups that are more confident about what their future will be.

Many groups are concerned about the impact of the regeneration on their participants. It is important to keep in mind that the community groups in Ballymun work with and provide services for the most socially excluded residents of Ballymun. The groups are concerned that new housing, and even new community facilities, in the absence of any strategies to address exclusion issues will maintain and deepen existing social divisions.

In order to address these issues, it is recommended to community groups in Ballymun that:

- Groups come together to form a network or platform of community groups that provides the structure to:
  - \* Share information.
  - \* Provide mutual support.
  - \* Undertake joint activities aimed at securing their future.
  - \* Develop a common vision for the future of community groups in the area.
  - \* Develop agreed structures for the participation of community groups in the regeneration of the area.
  - \* Develop collective responses to the challenges and opportunities presented by the regeneration of the area.
  
- Groups embrace their leadership role in the community and work individually and collectively to pursue the involvement of groups and residents in the regeneration process. It is recommended that groups:
  - \* Develop strategic plans for their future.

- \* Maintain and improve accountability to their participants.
  - \* Lobby the Government and state agencies for the policy changes and resources required to facilitate community participation.
- Groups work with local statutory agencies and with BRL to develop a team of Community Development Workers with the specific brief of facilitating community participation in the regeneration.

This report identifies 13 different statutory and other agencies that are providing funds for the work of the community groups that participated in the research. None of the agencies that are currently investing in Ballymun's community infrastructure have engaged the groups that they are funding in discussions about the future in light of the regeneration programme. In particular, many community groups believe that their premises needs should be met by Dublin Corporation but have not had any discussions with the Corporation about this expectation.

In addition, the state agencies in Ballymun have a responsibility to provide facilities and services in relation to employment, health, education, housing, social welfare, policing, transport and the environment. Each of these areas is of vital concern to the quality of life for Ballymun residents. While aspirations for the development of each area are outlined in the Masterplan for the new Ballymun, none of the agencies have made public statements about what contribution they will be making to the implementation of these developments. Essentially, the agencies appear to be "passing the 'future-of-Ballymun' buck" to BRL.

It is clear that, for the "Integrated Area Plan" approach to work, all of the state agencies need to be actively committed to the regeneration process.

In order to address these issues, it is recommended to state agencies in Ballymun that:

- Agencies, in consultation with local groups, collectively develop strategic and integrated plans for the development of their services in the area during and beyond the regeneration programme.
- Agencies begin dialogue with the community groups that they are funding in order to develop agreements about their future supports to groups during and beyond the regeneration programme.
- Agencies provide additional resources to the community groups that they are currently supporting in order to facilitate them to engage proactively with the regeneration process.
- Agencies work with local community groups and with BRL to develop a team of Community Development Workers with the specific brief of facilitating community participation in the regeneration.

It is clear from this research that BRL has broken new ground in terms of the Irish experience of community consultation during regeneration projects. More has been done by BRL both to ask the community for its ideas and to inform the community about decisions being made than in any previous project and community involvement remains a clear aspiration of the Masterplan. BRL have followed every suggestion for community consultation and participation that has been put to them by the Department of the Environment and Local Government, and they have done so without any line of funding from the Department for community involvement activities.

However, because the Departments few suggestions in relation to community consultation and participation deal with the question from a "vertical" point of view, the approach being used by BRL has largely bypassed the community infrastructure and leadership that was in place at the time that the regeneration programme began. Thus, in their approach, BRL appear to view community groups as separate from the community and to undervalue the contribution that these groups are making to Ballymun. This has resulted in a large number of groups expressing fears about what BRL are doing and negative views of their experience of BRL.

Groups expressed fears that BRL do not believe that groups can contribute in a positive way to the regeneration of the area; that BRL believe that there will be no need for many of the groups because the regeneration programme will solve the problems that the groups are tackling; that BRL think that they know what's best for Ballymun anyway and believe that engaging in dialogue with groups will only slow down or disrupt the regeneration programme. BRLs approach has also placed an extremely heavy burden on the Area Forums that, in turn, are seriously under-resourced and struggling to meet the demands being made of them. Thus, despite BRLs best efforts to date, there is considerable frustration at local level about how they interact with the community.

It must be remembered that BRLs principal responsibility is to provide new housing to replace the flats in Ballymun, that their efforts to engage with the community have been in a policy vacuum and with no specific resources dedicated to the process of community involvement, and that, even so, they have managed more consultation than any regeneration company that has come before them. However, in failing to understand the dynamics and potential of the community sector in Ballymun BRL are missing a vital opportunity to engage the community in the regeneration programme, are undermining the role of the local leadership, fostering division between groups, and feeding local fears and uncertainties about the future.

In order to address the issues arising, it is recommended that BRL:

- Work with community groups to develop community involvement structures and processes that tap into the expertise of local leadership.
- Widen its board structures to facilitate the involvement of more local people at decision-making levels.
- Lobby statutory agencies and central Government to adequately resource community involvement through the community groups and the Area Forums.

- Work with groups and agencies to develop a team of Community Development Workers with the specific brief of facilitating community participation in the regeneration programme.

The policy vacuum surrounding the practice of community consultation or community involvement in regeneration projects is both unhelpful and unnecessary. It is unhelpful in that it leaves every new project the job of re-inventing wheels and each new area vulnerable to the tensions that arise from the different interpretations of “community involvement” among the main players. And it is unnecessary in that there is a well-documented body of work defining good practice in this area that has been built up here and in Europe.

In order to address this issue, it is recommended to the Department of Environment and Local Government that:

- Criteria and guidelines for community consultation about, and involvement in, regeneration projects be developed and adopted as policy at Central Government level.
- That these criteria and guidelines be based on the wealth of experience and expertise already gained in communities like Ballymun.
- That these criteria and guidelines include mechanisms for measuring the effectiveness and impacts of any consultation process or community involvement strategy undertaken in disadvantaged areas.

## **The Last Word For Now**

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Ballymun's future is being decided right now. It is imperative that the people of Ballymun have an active role in deciding that future. This is true not because ‘community involvement’ is currently politically fashionable. It is true because if the people of the area are not involved in deciding the future, the chances of the regeneration radically altering the deprivation that Ballymun suffers from are very much lessened.

The good news is that the time could not be better for taking radical new steps to promote meaningful community participation in the regeneration of Ballymun. The Government are clearly saying that they want local community participation in urban regeneration efforts. Ballymun can provide them with a powerful demonstration of how that can be done and the benefits that it brings. The expertise is here at local level among the community groups and the statutory agencies. Everybody in a position of responsibility wants the regeneration to work.

Everyone has a part to play in ensuring that the maximum benefit is derived from this process of regeneration. CAP calls on all of the stakeholders – the community groups, the state agencies and BRL and the Government – to come together to agree the part that each will play.

**Guidance for Single Regeneration Budget bids  
Joseph Rowntree Foundation Ref 169**

The Government is giving a higher profile to building capacity within communities so that they can play a more substantial part in regeneration work. Up to 10 per cent of Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) funding is to be available specifically to support community involvement - significantly more than has previously been available. The Social Exclusion Unit, through its report *Bringing Britain Together*, has also been influential in raising many of the key issues.

Since 1992, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) has been looking at what works in the regeneration of deprived neighbourhoods, with a strong focus on the role that local residents and community organisations can play. This paper has been prepared at the request of the DETR in order to share JRF's research findings with bidders for SRB funds. Experience shows that successful involvement is more likely when partners, including the community, develop clear strategies as early as possible and are prepared to invest time and resources in building the capacity of local organisations.

Prior to developing SRB bids it is essential for partnerships to develop 'Community Involvement Strategies' which outline methods for involving residents and local organisations before, during and after SRB programmes. Strategies should be comprehensive and, although their shape and content will vary according to local circumstances, attention needs to be paid to all the areas outlined below:

**Getting started**

- Map local organisations;
- Understand local priorities and skills;
- Build confidence through early project work
- Develop a vision and action plans with local communities.

**Involving communities in partnerships**

- Create partnership structures that work for local communities
- Make resources available for community groups
- Arrange training for both community activists and professionals;
- Help community groups with administrative and financial procedures.

**Creating strong local organisations with their own assets**

- Develop a partnership 'forward strategy', including a strong role for community groups;

- Consider possible models for successor organisations including: development trusts; neighbourhood management organisations; LETS; and credit unions.

**Developing an infrastructure to build and sustain community organisations**

- Accept that community organisations need long-term support;
- Contribute to the better co-ordination of training and support services;
- Take steps to secure pre-bid resources for community groups.

**Monitoring progress**

- Establish a framework for evaluating both concrete outputs and key processes in community involvement;
- Ensure appropriate monitoring of progress both by the partnership and by Government Offices for the Regions (Regional Development Agencies after April 1999).

**INTRODUCTION**

**Community involvement is not a 'bolt-on' or a cosmetic activity**

**Why involve the community?**

Quite simply, because it produces better results. JRF research shows that, to date, the impact of community involvement on regeneration has generally been modest, and that commitment to community involvement has often been tokenistic. On the other hand, good practice in this field of work shows that:

- Communities have a fresh perspective, and can often see the problems in new ways.
- Community involvement helps to deliver programmes which more accurately target local needs.
- The resulting projects are more acceptable to the local community.
- Programme outputs which have been designed with input from local residents are likely to last longer because communities feel ownership of them.
- The constructive involvement of communities in urban regeneration helps to build local organisational skills, making it easier to develop strong successor organisations.
- Partnerships are here to stay - Government will insist on a demonstrably stronger role for communities within these partnerships.
- Successful community involvement helps to revitalise democracy.

### **Not an easy option**

Involving communities in regeneration is not an easy option. Some urban and rural communities are already well organised but many are not. In these cases, which may include city-wide initiatives, the building of capacity is slow and requires various types of support. It is important for partnerships to realise that community involvement is not a 'bolt-on' or a cosmetic activity: real community involvement involves compromise, sharing power, learning to cope with diversity, adjusting organisational cultures, understanding different styles of work, handling conflict constructively, and adjusting priorities and timetables.

These problems may be daunting at first. But, with persistence, they can be overcome and real benefits achieved. The aim of this paper is to provide the framework, with many practical examples, for developing effective Community Involvement Strategies.

### **GETTING STARTED**

#### **Adequate resources must be earmarked for early work**

##### **How soon should the community be involved?**

As early as possible. SRB bids that do not demonstrate community involvement are unlikely to be successful. Partnerships must ensure that adequate resources are earmarked for this early work. As SRB funds come on stream, dedicated officers should be appointed with responsibility for community involvement. When they need it, community groups should also have access to resources to appoint their own community workers or technical advisers.

##### **Understanding community needs and strengths**

An indispensable step for partnerships is to understand - from the standpoints of local residents - both the problems and the priorities for action in the target communities. They also need to map existing community organisations and develop an understanding of who, for each project, the legitimate 'stakeholders' might be. At this stage, it can be helpful to initiate an honest dialogue about possible roles for the community, the levels of power to be devolved, and any limits to this.

##### **Start-up projects - the importance of early successes**

In communities that have been marginalised for many years, the confidence of local residents will often be at a low ebb and they may well be angry and frustrated. At an early stage, it can be helpful to encourage the community to take on some modest tangible projects that meet local needs, for example:

- running a local five-a-side tournament;
- organising a trip to the seaside;
- improving the route of the local bus;
- pushing for repairs to the pavements on the estate.

All of these activities were actually carried out by local residents in the early stages of a community development project on the Halton Moor Estate in Leeds. This helped them to develop confidence and build relationships with professional agencies.

Fun is an important ingredient and festivals or community arts projects are good ways of encouraging wide participation.

### **Mapping**

David Wilcox's Guide to Effective Participation contains several ideas for mapping existing community organisations, networking and identifying key stakeholders. It is important to cast a wide net and, besides community groups, to think of:

Partnerships need to recognise that community groups are autonomous bodies that have a life outside SRB programmes. The functions of existing bodies should be respected. Thought also needs to be given to how involvement in SRB may change the role of groups and to the

- young people;
- minority ethnic groups;
- organisations of disabled people;
- different age groups;
- faith communities;
- front-line staff from statutory and voluntary agencies who have good local knowledge.

In the Sparkbrook area of Birmingham considerable effort was put into raising the area's profile by building up strong links with community-based networks. This work led to a community-based SRB application.

### **Developing a vision and action plans**

The process of developing a community vision for an area and feeding this into a bid for urban regeneration always takes time and resources. The DETR report, *Involving Communities in Urban and Rural Regeneration*, goes into many of these techniques in depth. Past experience has shown that the contribution of community groups significantly increases if they have access to independent advice (from a community worker, a consultant or a community architect) to help them develop a vision, priorities and action plans.

#### **Developing a community vision**

It can be helpful to plan the work in the following three stages.

#### ***Street meetings, workshops or design days***

Using facilitators, these events aim to provide a friendly, informal atmosphere in which local residents can 'brainstorm' a range of ideas.

***On York's Bell Farm Estate, a series of street meetings (several in each street) was held between residents and architects in order to brainstorm ways of re-designing the street layout.***

Small meetings can be an excellent way to meet with young people. It is important to have clear feedback mechanisms from such events.

#### **Community planning events**

As ideas begin to solidify it can be useful to hold a longer event - like a community planning weekend - which brings together a

### **INVOLVING THE COMMUNITY IN PARTNERSHIPS**

#### **Have the structures in place - and relationships clear - before project work starts**

##### **Guidance for Single Regeneration Budget bids**

Involving the community in partnerships requires time, resources and sensitivity. It is important to have the structures in place, and relationships clear, before project work starts. It is crucial too to achieve early clarity about when the community is being consulted and when it has the power to share decisions or to veto them. The new possibility within SRB of a 'year zero' in which no project spending is necessary, provides the ideal means to carry out the initial spadework in a thorough way.

#### **Agreeing the partnership structure**

Inevitably, partnership structures will vary according to local circumstances. But experience suggests that four key areas demand particular attention:

##### ***Developing structures to represent the community***

Any area, however small, will have a range of existing community groups. In larger programme areas, the diversity will be much greater. A key first step is to develop a forum that can adequately represent this diversity. Representation is sometimes

real danger that community representatives may be over-burdened with extra work.

### **Community profiles**

Carrying out a community profile with local residents can be a very useful way of defining the needs of a particular population, as well as the resources and skills that exist within the community. For rural areas, a comparable approach is the Village Appraisal. Both techniques have the potential to involve the community actively.

On North Tyneside's Meadowell Estate, in the lead-up to the City Challenge project, local residents carried out a skills survey on the estate, covering over 1,000 households, with financial support from the Council.

large group of key stakeholders and transforms promising ideas into action plans, projects or even complete SRB delivery plans.

**In 1994, the North Hull Housing Action Trust held a series of community planning weekends, in different parts of the estate, to help solidify thinking within that programme. The weekends included: workshops, walkabouts, presentations by guest speakers, question and answer sessions, dinners and social events. Models, drawings and displays were also used extensively to generate discussion. Leaflets summarising the results of the weekend were circulated to all residents.**

#### **Exhibitions/open days/referendums**

Finally, it is important to gain wider public support for more detailed plans once these have been worked up. Holding open days with exhibitions in popular venues can be a good way of attracting interest. Alternatively a referendum or postal vote, with a door-to-door collection, has proved a good way of gauging the strength of local opinions. In either case, good publicity in the local media and community newsletters is essential.

based on neighbourhood, sometimes on communities of interest, and sometimes on both approaches. Forums have a variety of functions which can include:

- electing representatives to the Board
- nominating representatives to working parties and topic groups;
- acting as a consultative group for the partnership;
- managing staff and projects;
- promoting particular interest groups within the community;
- and acting as a channel of information.

Some areas appoint specialist forums. Tipton City Challenge had a youth forum and a multi-faith forum. It is important that the rights and responsibilities of each forum are clear, and that each has sufficient active membership and resources to operate effectively.

#### ***Community representation at Board level***

The key role of community representatives is to ensure all project sponsors have consulted the community in appropriate ways and that the views obtained are reflected in the Board's decisions.

**In Middlesbrough City Challenge, every project considered by the Board had been commented on by the community representative body: if they disapproved, the decision was put back for further discussion.**

To create community confidence it is preferable for the community to select representatives and for representatives to be able to discuss Board matters with the community. Rules on confidentiality should be agreed, but should encourage openness.

#### ***Topic groups/implementation groups***

Below Board level, many partnerships establish 'topic' or 'implementation' groups, which mirror the core aims of the partnership. Usually, these are theme-based. Sometimes, as in the case of Sunderland City Challenge which is based on nine local authority estates, the implementation groups are organised around geographical areas. These sub-groups of the Board allow further opportunities for community representatives to play a key role in designing, implementing and monitoring projects.

#### ***Making meetings community-friendly***

At all levels of the partnership structure, it is very important that meetings should be conducted in a style that community partners are comfortable with. Attention should be paid to:

- the time of day set for meetings;
- the language used in meetings;
- the level of formality to be adopted at meetings;
- the possibility of larger meetings being broken down at certain points into smaller groups, to facilitate participation;
- the most appropriate venues; transport; childcare arrangements; and any translation services that may be needed.

#### ***Involving the community in project delivery***

The most dynamic forms of community participation come about when the community owns or controls programmes or projects.

**In Devonport, near Plymouth, the residents of the Pembroke Street Estate played a leading role in the Estate Action-funded refurbishment of their estate; this led in turn to the formation of a Tenant Management Organisation run by the residents and employing several of their number. But the project also encompassed a wider vision which included the economic transformation of the surrounding Dockland areas.**

**Deptford City Challenge had a block fund called 'Deptford Dividend', with £3m available over five years. The Dividend was promoted through the Community Forum. In York Regeneration Partnership, the Community Forum makes the key recommendation on who the Community Fund grants should go to.**

Community block funds can be a useful technique for building capacity and experience within the community, but care should be taken to ensure that they do not divert the community's attention away from the bigger spending decisions on the partnership. SRB Round 5 specifically provides for resources to be earmarked to support projects led by communities.

#### ***Training and resourcing***

Effective partnership working and community involvement require training and other resources, for both the community partner and the other partners.

#### ***Resourcing key community groups***

Community groups need office space, telephones, an administrative budget and, if they are to perform on equal terms with other partners, access to professional expertise (legal, financial, etc.).

#### ***Tackling the steep learning curve for community representatives***

Community representatives need a jargon-free induction to the demands of partnership work which covers:

- programme administration processes, including financial administration;
- legal frameworks and responsibilities;
- maintaining accountability
- basic assertiveness, including public speaking;
- support to help individuals grow into their representative, leadership, or 'social entrepreneur' roles.

### ***Getting professional agencies up to speed on community issues***

For professionals, learning to work in equal partnerships with communities - learning to listen and respect their views - is of central importance: in the past, many have failed to make this important first step. At times, separate training is appropriate; but increasingly, joint training sessions between residents and professionals have proved successful.

For both residents and professionals, a range of good training techniques already exists including: group-based training, courses, action-based learning, mentoring, placements, exchange visits, and conferences/seminars.

### **Encouraging flexibility**

It is important for community groups involved in project work to be protected from (or helped with) any undue administrative burdens. Drawing down money should also be made as straightforward as possible. Most bureaucracy arises from conditions imposed by partnerships on individual projects, not from government rules.

Finally, programmes involving the community tend to deliver better results when they are allowed to be creative and flexible. The benefits of partnership working should increase over time and there must be scope for amending projects and programmes to allow fresh ideas to be incorporated.

## **CREATING STRONG LOCAL ORGANISATIONS WITH THEIR OWN ASSETS**

### **Every partnership needs a forward strategy**

#### **Forward strategies and successor bodies**

Every partnership needs a forward strategy. In the JRF report, *Made to Last*, Geoff Fordham suggested four key requirements for effective forward strategies:

- incorporate the forward strategy into partnership planning at the outset;
- handle the actual timing of withdrawal with care, wherever possible dovetailing into new funding programmes;
- consider sustainability when funding individual projects - joint ventures with other agencies, including the community, are more likely to survive;
- identify, and start developing, appropriate successor organisations as early as possible. An existing local organisation may well provide the basis for an effective successor organisation.

Successor bodies can take many forms: some promising models are examined in more detail in the box.

#### **Models for successor bodies**

##### ***Development Trusts***

In their report *Here to Stay*, the Development Trusts Association define development trusts as "community-based organisations working for the sustainable regeneration of their area through a mixture of economic, environmental, social and cultural initiatives". Some have assets of over £200k and employ a large number of professional staff, while others are small and operate largely by voluntary efforts.

**The Manor and Castle Development Trust in Sheffield grew out of community-led projects in the 1980s. The Trust, a partnership between the local authority, the community and the private sector, secured £16.6m from SRB Round 3 as part of a local regeneration package. As part of this package, over a seven-year period, 1,000 homes will be built, 750 new jobs created, and many new and existing projects will be supported and developed.**

##### **Neighbourhood management**

Forward strategies that can access mainstream local authority programmes are more likely to prove sustainable. One good example is Tenant Management Organisations (for example, the Estate Management Boards on the Belle Isle and Halton Moor Estates in Leeds). These are local organisations, managing large budgets and sometimes staff, and giving residents a key role in managing estates.

**Area Co-ordination is a form of multi-agency neighbourhood management that has been adopted over a range of disadvantaged urban areas in Coventry. In each area, the local authority has appointed a senior officer who co-ordinates the work of the major service departments in the locality. Residents are also involved and, through joint work with professionals, develop annual action plans to tackle local problems. Areas of work include: health, family support, and community safety. Another form of neighbourhood management is achieved by the multi-agency Estate Agreement piloted on two York estates (Bell Farm and Foxwood) with JRF support. In the Bell Farm agreement, local residents negotiated service agreements with: community policing; housing; jobs and training; the local adventure playground; leisure services for children and adults; street cleaning; and the dog warden. The Agreement is managed by an ongoing monitoring group consisting of residents and professionals.**

##### **Other economic development organisations**

In the last few years around 400 Local Exchange Trading Schemes (LETS) have been set up in the UK, involving 35,000 people. LETS are groups of people who co-operate to exchange goods and service; offers and requests are listed in a

LETS directory, a form of 'neighbourhood Yellow Pages'.

A credit union is a mutual co-operative, owned and run by its members, offering accessible savings and low interest loans. Community credit unions tend to be more successful if they are based in existing community initiatives. There is also evidence that local authority development work has often been the key to successful credit unions at the local level.

## **DEVELOPING A SUPPORT INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUSTAIN COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS**

### **The question of long-term support should be tackled at the earliest possible stage**

Although SRB (and other Government initiatives) provide a welcome means of building capacity in deprived communities, there remain problems. There is still a lack of funding to support community efforts in the pre-bid phase. And, as short-term initiatives draw to a close, there is the question of who will provide long-term support for community organisations. The reality is that organisations in the community sector often hit troughs and, at these times, will need extra support in order to stave off decline or collapse. These potential difficulties need to be recognised, and planned for, at the earliest possible stage. In local authorities with several regeneration programmes, Regeneration Units with dedicated staff can respond to these needs. This section looks at how ongoing support can be given.

### **Existing resources**

What resources already exist for providing ongoing support to the community sector? At the local level, most local authorities have budgets for grant-aid to community organisations and many employ community development workers. They can also offer various types of help in kind.

Locally based organisations such as housing organisations, faith organisations and schools also have resources that can help capacity building. Other resources are available from charitable trusts, voluntary sector organisations and private business.

### **Developing a more integrated support infrastructure**

Better value could be achieved from all these resources, particularly at the city level, if they were used in a more strategic manner. There is some evidence that more 'joined-up' ways of delivering support are being developed:

- Training networks are beginning to emerge from the community sector itself.  
**With SRB funding, a Community Work Training Company in West Yorkshire has developed a range of accredited community work skills courses aimed at people who are active in their communities and in their community work. The networking of community groups is one of the support systems offered.**
- Some agencies are developing free-standing programmes, funded by SRB, which are wholly concerned with strengthening the community's role in regeneration.  
**The Pan London Community Regeneration Consortium is a voluntary sector partnership, funded by SRB, with the aim of enabling London voluntary and community organisations to play an even greater role in community partnerships and assisting local regeneration partnerships to become more responsive to the needs of local communities. The West Midlands Black Voluntary Sector Regional Regeneration Network carries out a similar role across six local authorities. Its role is to increase interaction between regeneration agencies and the black voluntary sector and to attract additional resources into the region, particularly from black voluntary organisations.**
- In response to the Government's announcement of a National Regeneration Strategy and the Local Government White Paper, there is potential for local authorities and other partners at the local level to realign their priorities for capacity building.  
**Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council has a Regeneration Division with a Director of Regeneration who sits alongside other Directors in the Corporate Management Team. The same Unit oversees community development and supports the voluntary sector within the Borough and, in addition to a number of area-based regeneration schemes, operates a special SRB-funded Community Capacity Building Project.**

Useful links could also be made with longer-term techniques for citizen involvement, such as 'neighbourhood visioning', piloted in Bristol. The creation of broader strategies, in these and other ways, is crucial in order to prevent partnership and initiative 'overload'.

### **Pre-bid resources**

It is widely acknowledged that existing resources for capacity building are not sufficient to cover need. A particular problem is the building of community capacity in disadvantaged areas prior to the bidding process. The JRF and other organisations have called for a National Community Resource Fund to be created by government with other partners (for example, the National Lottery and the private sector). Such a fund, with £10m per annum, could help local organisations in deprived areas to: develop visions and action plans for their neighbourhoods; provide smaller scale funding for confidence building start-up projects; and provide residents with access to initial training, leadership development and consultancy services.

## **MONITORING PROGRESS**

### **Without monitoring, token community involvement could take the place of real participation**

#### **Why evaluate community involvement?**

Because evaluation can provide ways of checking that the Community Involvement Strategy is going according to plan and that money invested in this has been well spent. In most cases the community, with fewer resources, is the weaker partner. Without a monitoring of progress, there is a danger that community priorities could be sidelined or that token community involvement could take the place of real participation by local residents. Throughout the monitoring process, full account must be taken of the community's views.

## **A framework for evaluating community involvement and capacity building**

### ***Partnership strategy***

Every partnership should be required to produce a Community Involvement Strategy. The strategy would define concrete outputs, as well as processes for community involvement.

### ***Quantifiable outputs***

Many of these concrete outputs are already defined in the SRB guidance and they include the numbers of: new tenant management organisations; new community facilities; voluntary organisations supported; individuals involved in voluntary work; community enterprise start-ups; capacity building initiatives carried out. There is scope to add further outputs: for example, the proportion of schemes supported where the community is an active partner.

### ***'Softer' outputs***

Many outputs of capacity building relate to the quality of the process rather than to numerical outputs. Ways must be found of monitoring key events and processes to show how they worked (or not) for local people. This could be achieved by using monitoring forms or by independent evaluation.

Some (though not all) of these processes are captured in the assessment criteria for bids in the SRB guidance. However, it is equally important that process measures are included alongside numerical outputs in the measures to be used in monitoring annual Delivery Plans. Without this, monitoring of community involvement and capacity building within partnerships will remain incomplete, and performance will certainly suffer as a result.

### **Monitoring by partners and government**

The adoption of the procedures suggested above would allow for the more accurate monitoring and regulation of community involvement and capacity building within urban regeneration partnerships. This would allow monitoring in three ways:

- The Government Regional Office (the RDA after April 1999) would be able to assess partnerships' Community Involvement Strategies and suggest changes or amendments.
- Partnerships could carry out their own monitoring, wherever possible involving independent evaluators and feeding their insights back into the partnership.
- Assessment of both numerical outputs and processes of community involvement would become part of the annual reporting procedure by partnerships to Government Regional Offices.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

The following reports contain further information on individual schemes and general issues. Findings (four-page summaries) can be viewed on the JRF's website or are available from our Publications Office (01904 615905). Reports marked \* are available through York Publishing Services Ltd, 64 Hallfield Road, Layerthorpe, York YO31 7ZX, Tel: 01904 430033, Fax: 01904 430868, e-mail: [orders@yps.ymn.co.uk](mailto:orders@yps.ymn.co.uk)

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### **Good practice in urban regeneration**

This paper cites good practice in the following areas and boroughs:

**Birmingham, Bloomsbury Estate Management Board** Roy Reid, Bloomsbury EMB, Flat 1, Medway Tower, 52 Cromwell Street, Nechells, Birmingham B7 5BD, Tel: 0121 359 1741

### **Birmingham, Sparkbrook District**

**Bristol, Choices for Bristol 'Community Visioning' Project** Paul Burton, Bristol University, School of Policy Studies, 8 Priory Road, Bristol BS8 1TZ, Tel: 0117 954 5569

**Coventry, Area Co-ordination System of Management** David Galliers, Area Co-ordination Office, Rooms 47/48, Council Offices, Earl Street, Coventry, CV1 5RR, Tel: 01203 831074

### **Deptford City Challenge Programme (now finished)**

Devonport, Estate Action-funded Regeneration, Pembroke Street Estate Christine Watts MBE, 102 Pembroke Street, Devonport, Plymouth, PL1 4JT, Tel/Fax: 01752 607273

**Hull, North Hull Housing Action Trust** Simon Clarke, North Hull Housing Action Trust, 536 Hall Road, Hull, HU6 9BS, Tel: 01482 856160

**Leeds, Belle Isle Estate Management Board** Linda Helen, Belle Isle EMB, Low Grange House, 8 Low Grange Crescent, Belle Isle, Leeds, LS10 3GA, Tel: 0113 271 6139

**Leeds, Halton Moor Estate** Brian Mumby, Halton EMB, 18 Furbank Grove, Leeds, LS15 0NY, Tel: 0113 264 4436

**London, Pan London Community Regeneration Consortium** Austen Cutten, BASSAC, Winchester House, 11 Cranmer Road, London, SW9 6EJ, Tel: 0171 820 3943

**Middlesbrough City Challenge** Bill Hayden, Middlesbrough Borough Council, 2nd Floor, Civic Centre, Municipal Buildings, Middlesbrough, TS1 2QQ, Tel: 01642 264113

**North Tyneside, Meadowell Estate** Carol Bell, Meadowell Youth and Community Centre, Waterville Road, North Shields, NE29 1BA, Tel: 0191 200 5464

**Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (Youth Forum)** Clive Dutton, Sandwell MBC, Sandwell Council House, PO Box 2374, Oldbury, B69 3DE, Tel: 0121 569 3080

**Sheffield, Manor and Castle Development Trust** Mike Patterson, Manor and Castle Development Trust, Norfolk House, Sheffield Lane, Sheffield, S2 5HR, Tel: 0114 278 9999

**South Yorkshire Consortium for Training in Community Work** John Grayson, Northern College, Wentworth Castle, Lowe Lane, Stainborough, Bamsley, S75 3ET, Tel: 01226 285426

**Sunderland City Challenge Programme** Doug Smith, Sunderland City Council, PO Box 100, Civic Centre, Sunderland, SR2 7DN, Tel: 0191 553 1154

### **West Midlands Black Voluntary Sector Regional Regeneration Network**

**West Yorkshire Company Work Training Company** Tony Herman, West Yorkshire Company Work Training Company, 128 Sunbridge Road, Bradford, BD1 2AT, Tel: 01274 745551

**York, Bell Farm and Foxwood Estate Agreements** Adele Reynolds, City of York Council, Strategic Planning Unit, The Guildhall, York, YO1 9QN, Tel: 01904 553721

**York, Bell Farm Estate** Louise Derby, City of York Council, Community Services, PO Box 402, 20 George Hudson Street, York, YO1 6ZE, Tel: 01904 613161

**York Regeneration Partnership (an SRB project)** Derek Gould, City of York Council, York Regeneration Partnership, 7 Odsall House, Front Street, Acomb, York YO2 3BL, Tel: 01904 786392



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